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Substance of the Speeches...for Promoting the Religious Instructio and Moral Improvement...in India.

By
William Wilberforce

FOR READING ROOM ONLY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES

Emerton and Headland, Printers,
Johnson's Court, London.

SUBSTANCE

OF THE

SPEECHES

OF

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

ON THE CLAUSE

IN THE EAST-INDIA BILL

FOR PROMOTING

THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

AND

MORAL IMPROVEMENT

OF

THE NATIVES OF THE BRITISH DOMINIONS

IN

INDIA,

On the 22d of JUNE, and the 1st and 12th of JULY, 1813.

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PREFACE.

THE Writer of the following pages has been induced to publish them, partly by a wish that his sentiments on the important subject of them, and the premises which led him to the conclusions which he has formed, should not be misunderstood; and partly, he confesses, because he finds, with concern, that notwithstanding all the light which has been thrown on the moral state of the natives of India, many respectable and intelligent men still entertain very mistaken notions on that great question. It appeared to him best, to put together, in the form of one Speech, the substance of what was said on at least two

different occasions. He is conscious, that, owing to his not having been able, from various hindrances, to execute his task till long after the discussion, his recollection, even of what he himself said, has become imperfect, and therefore that his publication may be in some respect an inaccurate statement of what he actually uttered. In one or two instances he has intentionally enlarged on topics on which, in speaking, he was more concise. But the inaccuracies of his publication, he believes, are none of them important; and more especially, it is correct in that particular which he deems by far the most worthy of attention, and of which, therefore, he entreats the reader's most serious consideration—the extracts from various documents taken from the East India Company's records, which have been laid before the House of Commons during the progress of the late Parliamentary Discussions. The subject itself he deems to be of a degree of importance which it transcends the powers

of language to express; and he trusts that they, whose sentiments he has opposed, will forgive the warmth with which he has felt it his duty to condemn their opinions. He believes that they are actuated, no less than himself, by a sincere desire to promote the welfare of their country.

SPEECH,

&c. &c.

I HAVE listened with no little pleasure to the Honourable Gentleman (the Hon. F. Douglas), who, for the first time, has been just delivering his sentiments; and I cordially congratulate him on the manifestation of talents and principles which, I trust, will render him a valuable accession to this House, and to his country; but before I proceed to the more direct discussion of the question before us, he will allow me to express my dissent from his opinion, that it might be advisable to employ our regular Clergy as Missionaries. It was a proposition, indeed, which naturally recommended itself to the mind of any one, who, like my Honourable Friend and myself, being attached, on principle, to the Church of England, and being deeply impressed with a sense of the blessings which we ourselves derive from it, are of course desirous of communicating the same blessings to others of our fellow-subjects.

I grant that it is much to be regretted, and among the Roman Catholics it has been the reproach of the Protestant Churches, that they have taken so little interest in the conversion of the heathen nations; and I may take this opportunity of declaring it as my opinion, that it is much to be regretted, that our excellent Church Establishment contains within itself no means of providing fit agents for the important work of preaching Christianity to the heathen. Nor is this a new opinion: on the contrary, I had the honour of stating it many years ago to two venerable and most respected Prelates, the late Archbishop of Canterbury and the late Bishop of London; and they expressed themselves favourably of a proposition which I submitted to their consideration, that there should be a distinct ordination for Missionaries, which should empower them to perform the offices of the Church in foreign Countries, but should not render them capable of holding Church Preferments, or even of officiating as Clergymen in this kingdom. It is obvious, that the qualifications required in those who discharge the duties of the ministerial office in this highly civilized community, where Christianity also is the established religion of the land, are very different from those for which we ought chiefly to look, in men whose office it will be to preach the Gospel to the heathen nations, which they will find unacquainted with the first principles of religion and morality;—from the qualifications which we should require in Instructors who

will probably be cast among Barbarians, and, besides having to encounter the grossest ignorance and its attendant vices, will also have to endure great bodily hardships and privations. But this is not the time for enlarging farther on this point, or on the suggestion of my Honourable Friend. It will not, I know, escape him, passing over other objections to the measure, that it necessarily implies, that the Missionaries who are to officiate in India, are to be expressly commissioned and employed by the state, or by the East-India Company; whereas, I am persuaded, we shall all concur in thinking, that it ought to be left to the spontaneous benevolence and zeal of individual Christians, controuled of course by the discretion of Government, to engage in the work of preaching the Gospel to the natives in our Indian territories; and that the Missionaries should be clearly understood to be armed with no authority, furnished with no commission, from the governing power of the country.

Allow me, Sir, before we proceed farther, to endeavour to do away a misconception of the thirteenth Resolution, which appears generally to prevail, that the only object it has in view is, to secure, to such Missionaries as the Board of Controul shall sanction, permission to go to India, and to remain there, so long as they shall continue to exercise the duties of their office in a peaceable and orderly manner. This undoubtedly is one object of the Resolution, but by no means the only, perhaps not the principal, one. I beg you to observe, that the very terms of the Resolution,

expressly state, that " we are to enlighten and inform the minds of the subjects of our East Indian empire." And after much reflection, I do not hesitate to declare, that, from enlightening and informing them, in other words, from education and instruction, from the diffusion of knowledge, from the progress of science, more especially from all these combined with the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the native languages, I ultimately expect even more than from the direct labours of Missionaries, properly so called.

By enlightening the minds of the natives, we should root out their errors, without provoking their prejudices; and it would be impossible that men of enlarged and instructed minds could continue enslaved by such a monstrous system of follies and superstitions as that under the yoke of which the natives of Hindostan now groan. They would, in short, become Christians, if I may so express myself, without knowing it.

Before I enter further into the argument, more especially after what we have lately heard from several of my opponents, it is due to myself, as well as respectful to the House, to state, that though I cannot, like them, speak of India from my own personal observation, yet that I do not presume to address them on this important question, without having studied it with the most strenuous and persevering diligence. That my attention has been long directed to the subject, will indeed sufficiently appear, when I remind the House, that I had the honour, in 1793, of moving the Resolu-

tion of late so often referred to, which declared it to be the duty of the Legislature, to diffuse among our East Indian fellow-subjects the blessings of useful knowledge and moral improvement; a Resolution which, with little or no opposition, was repeatedly sanctioned by the approbation of the House: and I can truly declare, that I have never since lost sight of this great object, though various circumstances concurred in preventing my again bringing it before the House: above all, that of my being, for almost the whole of that period, engaged in the pursuit of an object of a kindred nature.

Before I enter into the argument, let me also clear away another misconception which has sometimes prevailed, by distinctly and most solemnly assuring the House, that, in the work of conversion, I abjure all ideas of compulsion; I disclaim all use of the authority, nay, even of the influence, of Government. I would trust altogether to the effects of reason and truth, relying much on the manifest tendency of the principles and precepts of Christianity to make men good and happy, and on their evident superiority in these respects, more especially when the minds of the natives shall become more enlarged and instructed than they are at present, over the monstrous and absurd superstitions of their native faith.

And now, Sir, let me enter into the discussion, by assuring the House, that there never was a subject which better deserved the attention of a

British Parliament than that on which we are now deliberating. Immense regions, with a population amounting, as we are assured, to sixty millions of souls, have providentially come under our dominion They are deeply sunk, and by their religious superstitions fast bound, in the lowest depths of moral and social wretchedness and degradation. Must we not then be prompted by every motive, and urged by every feeling that can influence the human heart, to endeavour to raise these wretched beings out of their present miserable condition, and above all to communicate to them those blessed truths which would not only improve their understandings and elevate their minds, but would, in ten thousand ways, promote their temporal well-being, and point out to them a sure path to everlasting happiness.

But our opponents confidently assure us, that we may spare ourselves the pains; for that the natives of Hindostan are so firmly, nay, so unalterably, attached to their own religious opinions and practices, however unreasonable they may appear to us, that their conversion is utterly *impracticable*.

I well know, Sir, and frankly acknowledge, the inveterate nature of the evils with which we have to contend; that their religious system and customs have continued with little alteration, for perhaps thousands of years; that they have diffused themselves so generally throughout all their institutions and habits, as to leaven, as it were, the

whole mass both of their public and private lives: but, nevertheless, Sir, I boldly affirm, that this position, that their attachment to their own institutions is so fixed that it cannot be overcome, is a gross error, abundantly falsified by much, and even by recent, experience. I beg the House to attend to this point the more carefully, because it serves as a general test by which to estimate the value of the opinions so confidently promulgated by the greater part of those gentlemen who have spoken of Indian affairs, both in this House and out of it, from personal experience. This is a persuasion universally prevalent among them; and if it can be disproved, as easily, as it will shortly I trust appear to you to be, it will follow, that those gentlemen, however respectable where their understandings have fair play, in point both of natural talents and acquired knowledge (and no man admits their claim to both more willingly than myself), are here under the influence of prejudice, and are not therefore entitled to the same degree of weight as if they were free from all undue bias.

And first, Sir, it might afford a strong presumption against the absolute invincibility of the *religious* principles and customs of the Hindoos, that great and beneficial reforms have been effected in various other most important instances in which their existing systems were, so far as we know, equally dear to them, and which were conceived to be equally unchangeable; for even in these, their religion was more or less implicated, because, as I before remarked, it has been

most artfully diffused throughout all their other institutions.

In proof of this assertion, it may be sufficient to specify that mighty change introduced about twenty years ago, by which the British Government granted to all classes of landholders an hereditary property in their estates; a privilege till then unknown in Asia: the rents to be paid to Government, which, as Sovereign of the country, was proprietor of the soil throughout all India, were equitably and unalterably settled; and I ought not to omit to state, that care was taken to secure to the inferior occupants, no less than to the great Chieftains, the secure possession of their properties without any increase of the rents.

Again: the most important reforms have been introduced into the judicial system; and in the military, even the most confirmed religious principles and habits have in some particulars been quietly overcome, and have fallen into disuse, with little or no observation. Nay, the general spirit of our Government, as it respects the natives, has for some time been such, as even that passionate lover of liberty, Sir William Jones, dared not to anticipate in the case of the natives of India; whom with pain, he, but a few years before, had pronounced to be given up to an unmitigated and unalterable despotism.

But it is not only where their religion has been indirectly concerned, that it has appeared that their institutions are susceptible of the same changes which have taken place in every other

country; but also, in many instances in which religion has been directly in question. How else can we account for that immense number of Mahometans, estimated at from ten to fifteen million, scattered over India, most of whom are supposed by the best judges to be converts from the Hindoo faith? And let me remind you of the stern and persecuting spirit of Mahometanism, and of the increased difficulty which would be thereby occasioned; since it is now an established truth, that persecution counteracts her own purpose and promotes the prevalence of the religion she would suppress.

Again: what shall we say of the whole nation of the Seiks, so numerous, as to be supposed able to raise 200,000 horse, who within a few centuries have forsaken the Hindoo faith, and freed themselves from its burthensome restrictions? *

The followers of Budha also, who reject Caste, are very numerous; and within the pale of the Hindoo faith itself, different sects spring up from time to time as in other countries. Mr. Orme says, "Every province has fifty sects of Gentoos, and every sect adheres to different observances."

But we have still surer grounds of hope; we have still better reasons than these for believing, that there is nothing in the nature or principles of

* Sir J. Malcolm's highly interesting publication concerning the Seiks, suggests many most important considerations respecting the mischiefs which, if not provided against by timely precautions, may hereafter result from the galling and severe pressure of the system of Castes on the lower orders of India

a Hindoo which renders it impossible for him to become a Christian; for it is notorious, that from the earliest times there have been many churches of native Christians in India. For the whole of the last century, the work of conversion has been going on with more or less success; and at this moment, there are hundreds of thousands of native Christians in the East Indies.

But here again, in justice to my argument, I cannot but remind the House of the signal example which this instance affords of the utter ignorance of our opponents on the subject we are now considering: for a Gentleman of high character, of acknowledged talents and information, who had passed thirty years in India, and who having fairly made his way to the first situations, possessed for full ten years a seat in the Supreme Council in Bengal, stated at your bar, that he had never heard of the existence of a native Christian in India, until after his return to England; he then learned the fact, to which however he seemed to give but a doubting kind of assent, from the writings of Dr. Buchanan. Can any thing more clearly prove, that Gentlemen, instead of seriously turning their minds to the subject, and opening their eyes to the perception of truth, have imbibed the generally prevailing prejudices of men around them, without question, and have thus suffered themselves to be led away to the most erroneous conclusions.

Let me mention also another circumstance, which well deserves consideration. If the asser-

tion of our opponents were correct, that the sensibility of the natives of India in all that regards their religion is so extremely great that they can scarcely listen with temper or patience to any arguments that are urged against it, it would naturally follow, that the Christian Missionaries, if, even from the dread of punishment, their lives should be safe, would be universally regarded with jealousy and detestation; whereas, as if on purpose to confute the unreasonable prejudices of our opponents, the most zealous, laborious, and successful Missionaries have commonly been, among all classes of the natives, the most esteemed and beloved of all the Europeans; and, let me repeat it, this is not only true of the ever memorable Swartz, but of Gericke, of Kolhoff, &c., as well as of Ziegenbalg and his colleagues, the Missionaries of a preceding generation. Swartz's eulogium it is unnecessary for me to pronounce, because our opponents themselves are loud in his praise. And it is acknowledged that, during his long and laborious ministry, he was among the natives, from the greatest to the least, an object of the highest respect and warmest affection.

But an Honourable Baronet rather insinuates, that Mr. Swartz's popularity among the natives might arise from points in his character which were less estimable in a religious view. Swartz, says the Honourable Baronet, was a *politician*. Yes, Sir; I thank the Honourable Baronet for reminding me of it; *Swartz was a politician*, but not a volunteer in that service: he became a po-

litician at the earnest and importunate intreaty of the East-India Government; because, having to negociate with Hyder Ally, they could find no one in whose integrity and veracity that chieftain would confide, but Swartz the Missionary: he therefore became a politician, and an accredited envoy, because, as a Missionary, he had secured to himself the universal confidence both of Mahometans and of Hindoos.

But even Swartz's converts, it is alleged, were all of the lowest class of the people, wretches who had lost caste, or were below it; and the same assertion is generally made concerning the native Christians at this day. This again, Sir, is one of those wretched prejudices which receive easy credence, because they fall in with the preconceived notions of the receiver, and pass current from man to man without being questioned, in spite of the plainest and most decisive refutation. Even our opponents themselves will refer to Mr. Swartz's own authority; and that excellent man having happened to read in India much such a speech concerning Missionaries as the Honourable Baronet has this day uttered, which had been made in the India-House the year before, by Mr. Montgomery Campbell, he positively contradicted all those stale assertions in disparagement of the Missionaries and their followers, which had been so generally circulated; among the rest, this of the low degraded quality of their converts; by stating, that if Mr. Campbell had even once attended their Church, he would have observed, that more than two thirds were of the

higher caste, and so it was, he said, at Tranquebar and Vepery. In like manner, Dr. Kerr, who was officially commissioned by the Madras Government, in 1806, to visit the Malabar coast, for the express purpose of obtaining every possible information in regard to the establishment, &c. of the Christian Religion in that part of the Peninsula, after stating, that the character of the native Christians, whose numbers, according to the best accounts, are estimated at from seventy to eighty thousand, is marked by a striking superiority over the heathens in every moral excellence, and that they are remarkable for their veracity and plain dealing, adds, "They are respected very highly by the Nairs" (the nobility of the country), "who do not consider themselves defiled by associating with them, though it is well known that the Nairs are the most particular of all the Hindoos in this respect; and the Rajahs of Travancore and Cochin admit them to rank next to Nairs*."

Again: a letter from a respectable gentleman in India to the venerable and justly honoured Dean of Westminster, Dr. Vincent, published in the Report of 1799 of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, mentions the almost universal prevalence of the grossest misconceptions, concerning the native converts to Christianity, and strongly opposes them. After stating that the number is very considerable, he adds; "That they consist of the lower or Pariar cast is a vulgar

* See Dr. Kerr's Report to the Madras Government, dated November 3, 1806.

error; and instead of being, as is often asserted, despised and contemptuously treated by their fellow natives, they are universally respected." He proceeds, however: "You may ask five gentlemen out of six, who return from India, their opinion of the state of the native Christians; their reply will probably be, that they see no use in the endeavours to propagate Christianity there; and this will be followed by a repetition of the commonplace idea, transferred from one to another without examination, 'What can a black fellow know about Christianity?'" I dwell the more, Sir, on this topic, because, how little soever deserving of notice these prejudices may appear to the eye of truth and reason, they are in fact the most powerful enemies with which we have to contend. Dr. Vincent's correspondent truly remarks; "It is from this sort of cant and jargon of ignorance and indifference, that false ideas respecting the native converts have been instilled into the minds of many at home." Miserable, however, as this jargon may be in the estimation of Dr. Vincent's correspondent, it is not to be despised, when its tendency is to detain an immense region of the earth in darkness and degradation. What we have heard in this House may convince us, though it is with pain and shame that we witness the anomaly, that men of excellent understandings and of liberal and well-informed minds can be misled by these groundless prepossessions. Even the excellent historian, Dr. Robertson, did not escape this contagion. Though commonly he is most justly to be respected for the accuracy

of his statements, he seems, though reluctantly, to admit the impracticability of converting the natives of India; and states, that in two hundred years, the converts amount but to about 12,000 in number; whom also, if I mistake not, he represents to be of the very lowest of the people, and, in direct contradiction to the most decisive testimony, to be, even after their conversion, a disgrace to the Christian name. I could multiply facts and arguments; but I trust, Sir, I have already decidedly established, that this notion of its being *impracticable* to convert the Hindoos is a vain and groundless theory; and that, in maintaining the opposite position, my friends and I stand on the solid and sure ground of abundant and indisputable experience.

But our opponents, encouraging one another in their error, take still higher ground, and affirm, that if it were practicable to convert the Hindoos to Christianity, it is not *desirable*. The principles of the Hindoos are so good, their morals are so pure; better than our own, as we are told by more than one Honourable Gentleman; that to attempt to communicate to them our religion and our morality, is, to say the least, a superfluous, perhaps a mischievous, attempt.

This, by the way, is no new doctrine; but, considering its origin, it is not altogether without shame, as well as grief, that I find it receiving any countenance in this assembly. It sprang up among the French sceptical philosophers, by whom it was used for the purpose of discrediting Christianity, by shewing, that in countries which

were wholly strangers to its light, the people were in general more gentle and peaceable, and innocent and amiable, than in those countries which had for the longest period professed the Christian faith. After the practical comment, however, which a neighbouring kingdom has afforded of the doctrines of the French philosophers, the opinions of our opponents will not experience a more favourable reception in this House, or in this country, on account of their issuing from such a source.

But really, Sir, I can only say, that if the principles and morals of our East Indian fellow-subjects were indeed so admirable, if they were even better than our own, it would be a fact that would belie the experience of all other times and countries. When was there ever yet a nation on which the light of Christianity never shone, which was not found in a state of the grossest moral darkness, debased by principles and practices and manners the most flagitious and cruel? Is not this true of all the most polished nations of antiquity? Did not more than one practice prevail among them, sanctioned often by the wisest and the best among them, which in all Christian countries would now be punished as a capital crime? But, Sir, have not moral causes their sure and infallible effects? Is it not notorious, that the nations of India have, from the very earliest times, groaned under the double yoke of political and religious despotism? And can it then be maintained, that these must not have produced a proportionate degradation of

their moral character? And is it in a British House of Commons, above all other places, where such a doctrine as this is maintained? Are we so little sensible of the value of the free constitution and religious liberty which we enjoy, and so little thankful for them, as to tolerate such propositions? No, Sir: I trust we shall be protected by our feelings, no less than by our understandings, against being carried away by any such delusions. No, Sir: the common sense of mankind, in this country at least, is not to be so outraged; and, in truth, we find the morals and manners of the natives of India just such as we might have been led to expect from a knowledge of the dark and degrading superstitions, as well as of the political bondage, under which they have been so long bowed down. To which I may add, that, such is the nature of their institutions and customs, that not religion only, but common humanity, should prompt us to exert all legitimate methods for producing the discontinuance of them.

But Honourable Gentlemen have read us passages from their religious books, some of which breathe a strain of pure and even sublime morality. The Institutes of Akbar also have been quoted upon us, and a learned work by a Bengal Officer has been published, resting almost entirely on this basis, with large extracts from the sacred writings of the Hindoos.

Let me beg the attention of the House, while I ask such of our opponents as urge this argu-

ment, whether they did or did not know that which is an undeniable fact (I refer to Mr. Halhed's translation of the Hindoo laws), that if a Soodra should get by heart, nay, if he should read, or even listen to the sacred books, the law condemns him to a most cruel death. If our opponents were ignorant of this, it shews how little they are qualified to be safe guides to us in the road we are now travelling: if they knew it, was it candid, nay, Sir, was it fair, to quote these passages of sublime morality, in proof of the superior moral state of the bulk of the East Indian population? Why, Sir, it is much the same in India (only worse) as it was among the most polished nations of the Pagan world. There, they had their exoteric and their esoteric doctrines: and while, in the writings of their philosophers, we meet with passages of high moral excellence, we know, that the moral opinions and practice of the bulk of the people were such as would appear to us at this day almost insufferably depraved, absurd, and monstrous. Where can we find more elevated strains than in the lofty speculations of the Imperial Philosopher Antoninus? And in return for the Institutes of Akbar I might name those of Tamerlane, justly declared by one of our opponents to be one of the most bloody tyrants that ever disgraced a throne, which are yet declared by Mr. Gibbon to form one of the most perfect systems ever published on the basis of absolute monarchy.

The topic we are now considering is of so great importance, that in justice to my argument, I must be permitted to enlarge upon it; though, after all, I must leave much unsaid, in order that I may not trespass on the indulgence of the House too largely; and as the authority of several gentlemen, long resident in India, is urged upon us in proof of the probity and superior morality of the natives of India, I must beg leave to bring forward my authorities also. And when the House shall have heard all I have to adduce, I am confident, that not a doubt will remain in their minds, that my representation of the moral character of the natives of India is borne out by an irresistible weight of unobjectionable testimony. And first, Sir, let me quote to you some general opinions of the moral state of the Hindoos, which have been given by authors of established credit, as well as by others whose authority is still higher, persons who held high stations in the Company's service for many years, and who, from having lived so long, and having had so much intercourse with them, must be supposed so have been perfectly acquainted with their real character. Several of the passages which I am about to read to you, are contained in a most valuable document lately laid before the House, the work of a dear and most honoured friend of mine, a Member of this House*, whose ex-

* I refer to a Memoir, by Mr. Grant, on the Moral State of India, the causes which have produced, and suggestions for improving it. The Memoir was principally written as long ago as 1792, soon after his return from India, and was laid before the

cellent understanding and acknowledged worth entitle all his opinions to be received with the utmost deference, and whose long residence in India and familiar acquaintance with its inhabitants have rendered him peculiarly competent to form a correct judgment on the point which we are now considering.

The first witness I shall bring forward is the traveller Bernier, an author of such established credit that his work was allowed to be received as evidence at Mr. Hastings's trial. He, who travelled among the natives about one hundred and fifty years ago, places the character of the people in general, and more especially that of the Brahmins, in the most unfavourable light; but as he no where gives a summary view of it, I will only refer generally to his high authority. The same unfavourable character of them, and more especially of the Brahmins, is also expressed by Mr. Scrafton *, whose instructive work was published about fifty years ago; and Mr. Orme, the excellent historian of the Carnatic, leads us to form a still lower estimate of their moral qualities. "Were not the Gentoos infamous for the want of generosity and gratitude in all the commerces of friendship; were they not a tricking, deceitful people

Court of Directors in 1797. It contains within a small compass, a large store of most valuable information concerning the religion and laws, the social and moral state and character, of the Hindoos. It is earnestly to be hoped, that his great modesty may not prevent his publishing to the world this valuable document, and thereby obtaining for it a more general perusal.

* Reflections on the Government of Hindostan, by Luke Scrafton, Esq.

in all their dealings; their charity could not be deemed to arise from the influence of superstition." —*Orme's India*, vol. IV. 4to. p. 434.

" Every offence is capable of being expiated by largesses to the Brahmins, prescribed by themselves according to their own measures of avarice and sensuality."

Orme's character of the East-Indian Mahomedans is still more unfavourable than that of the Brahmins. " A domineering insolence towards all who are in subjection to them, ungovernable wilfulness, inhumanity, cruelty, murders, and assassination, perpetrated with the same calmness and subtlety as the rest of their politics, and insensibility to remorse for these crimes, which are scarcely considered otherwise than as necessary accidents in the course of life; sensual excesses, which revolt against nature; unbounded thirst of power, and a rapaciousness of wealth equal to the extravagance of his propensities and vices!" " This is the character of an Indian Moor."—*Orme on the Manners, &c. of the Indian Moors*, Ibid. p. 423*.

Governor Holwell gives a summary account of the native East-Indian character in such clear terms that his own words shall be quoted; and let it be remembered that Holwell's mind, to say the least, was not in any degree biassed by his attachment to the Christian system, as compared with

* Well might Mr. Orme exclaim, after so humiliating a picture of human depravity, " How grateful, how noble, are the reflections inspired by such a retrospect, in favour of the cause of Christianity, and in favour of the cause of liberty!"—*Orme's India*, vol. IV. p. 430.

that of the natives of India:—"A race of people who, from their infancy, are utter strangers to the idea of common faith and honesty. The Gentoos in general are as dangerous and wicked a people as any race of people in the known world, if not eminently more so, especially the common run of Brahmins. We can truly aver, that during almost five years that we presided in the Judicial Cutcherry Court of Calcutta, never any murder or other atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved in the end a Brahmin was at the bottom of it."

Lord Clive's* testimony is given in the same clear and compendious language:—"The inhabitants of this country we know, by long experience, have no attachment to any obligation."

An equally unfavourable character of them is given by Governor Verelst†, especially in respect of avarice, treachery, and ingratitude.

Mr. Shore‡ (now Lord Teignmouth) paints their character in still darker colours:—"The natives are timid and servile: individuals have little sense of honour, and the nation is wholly void of public virtue. They make not the least scruple of lying, where falsehood is attended with advantage. To lie, steal, plunder, ravish, or murder, are not deemed sufficient crimes to merit expulsion from society."

"With a Hindoo all is centered in himself; his

* See Bolt's Considerations, vol. III.

† See Verelst's View of the English Government in Bengal.

‡ See the Parliamentary Proceedings against Mr. Hastings. Appendix to Vol. II.

own interest is his guide." With other particulars of a similar complexion.

Sir John Macpherson *, who was Governor-General between twenty and thirty years ago, commenting on the foregoing description, thus confirms the accuracy of the delineation: "I am afraid that the picture which he (Mr. Shore) draws, and the low ebb at which he states the popular virtues of the Bengalese, are not fictitious representations."

Lord Cornwallis proved by his conduct that he considered the natives as unworthy of all confidence; for, contrary to the general usage of men occupying such stations as he filled, he never reposed any trust in any one of them, nor placed a single individual, either Hindoo or Mahomedan, about his person, above the rank of a menial servant.

It is not, perhaps, unworthy of notice, that a character equally unfavourable of the natives of Hindostan, was given four hundred years ago by their great conqueror Tamerlane. "The native of Hindostan," he says, "has no pretensions to humanity but the figure; whilst imposture, fraud, and deception, are by him considered as meritorious accomplishments."——The foregoing compilation of authorities is closed by my Honourable Friend, with the following compendious delineation of the native Indian character.

"Upon the whole, we cannot help recognizing in the people of Hindostan a race of men lamen

* See the Parliamentary Proceedings against Mr Hastings. Appendix to Vol. II.

tably degenerate and base; retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation; obstinate in the disregard of what they know to be right; governed by malevolent and licentious passions; strongly exemplifying the effects produced on society by great and general corruption of manners; sunk in misery by their vices, in a country peculiarly calculated by its natural advantages to promote the happiness of its inhabitants."

But we are far from having laboured through the long and melancholy succession of witnesses, who attest the moral degradation of the natives of India. Several of the passages I have already recited are accounts of earlier times; and it might perhaps be hoped, that the moral character of the natives has been improved, in consequence of their having lived so long under our government. Alas, Sir! grieved I am to be under the necessity of stating, that this is by no means the fact. I might, I fear, go still farther, and affirm, that the moral standard of the natives has been even deteriorated of late years. The first witness whom I shall call in proof of the present depraved state of the natives of India, is a gentleman well known in this House for his talents and his eloquence, and whom there is reason, I trust, to believe, that we shall shortly have the honour of including in our number: I scarcely need explain, that I am speaking of Sir James Mackintosh. He, it is well known, lately presided on the Bench of Justice in Bombay; and in a charge to the Grand Jury at Bombay, delivered in the year 1803, he thus expressed himself: "I

observe, that the accomplished and justly celebrated person, Sir William Jones, who carried with him to this country a prejudice in favour of the natives, which he naturally imbibed in the course of his studies, and which in him, though not perfectly rational, was neither unamiable nor ungraceful, I observe, that even he, after long judicial experience, reluctantly confessed their general depravity. The prevalence of *perjury* which he strongly states, and which I have myself already observed, is perhaps a more certain sign of the general dissolution of moral principle than other more daring and ferocious crimes, much more horrible to the imagination, and of which the immediate consequences are more destructive to society."

Again, at a subsequent period, he remarks; "An offence, of the frequency of which I formerly spoke from information, but can now speak from *large and deplorable experience*, I mean perjury —"

A melancholy proof of the low standard of morals in the East was afforded on one of the occasions which drew from Sir James Mackintosh the above remarks. A woman who was one of the witnesses, having prevaricated shockingly, was asked by the Recorder, "Whether there was any harm in false swearing, she answered, that she understood the English had *a great horror of it, but there was no such horror in her country.*" See the Bombay Law Reports, given in the Asiatic Register for 1804.

But, perhaps, the most decisive proofs of all

are contained in the answers to certain interrogatories concerning the moral state of the natives, which were sent round by Lord Wellesley, when Governor-General. Lord Wellesley, wishing to obtain the most authentic and complete information, would of course consult such persons as he conceived to be best qualified from the situations which they occupied, to give him the intelligence which he desired. He therefore applied to the Judges of Circuit, and also to magistrates permanently settled in the different provinces. A vain attempt, indeed, has been made to do away the effect of this testimony, by asking what judgment we should form of the moral character of our own people, if we were to take our estimate of it from the criminals who fill our gaols. I must say, I wonder that the Honourable Gentlemen who held this language, were not checked by recollecting that they were in reality reflecting strongly on the discretion of Lord Wellesley himself, for having applied for information to a description of persons which he ought to have known not to be qualified to supply it. But, Sir, you will observe, that it is concerning the general character of the natives that the gentlemen interrogated by Lord Wellesley were questioned; and I cannot conceive that there can be any set of men better qualified in all respects to form a correct opinion of the general character and conduct of the natives, than such of the Company's servants as are resident magistrates. I will not weary the House with the whole of the melancholy detail; but a few of the

answers I must lay before them. The first shall be the statement of Mr. Edward Colebrook, second Judge of the Patna Court of Circuit, dated Patna, 21st April, 1804. "Another not less heinous offence attaching to those affrays is perjury, to which recourse is invariably had, both for the prosecution and defence of such charges. To such a pitch of audacity has this crime long since reached in this province, *that a total distrust of human testimony, on every occasion, is the consequence. No rank, no caste, is exempt from the contagion.* A Zemindary Dewan, a Brahmin, who had circumstantially sworn to the nature and number and to the authors of the wounds on two of his cutcherry amla, alleged to have been murdered in an attempt to dispossess him from the cutcherry, scarcely blushed when the two men were produced alive and unhurt in court, and merely pleaded that had he not sworn as directed, he should have lost his employ."

Let me now read an equally humiliating extract from the answers of Mr. J. D. Paterson, Judge of Decca, Jellelpore, &c. to the President, &c. Members of the Police Committee, 30th Aug. 1799. "As a picture of human degradation and depravity can only give pain to a reflecting mind, I shall be as brief as possible, consistently with the necessity of furnishing the required information. Their minds are totally uncultivated; of the duties of morality they have no idea; they possess in a great degree that low

cunning which so generally accompanies depravity of heart. They are indolent and grossly sensual; they are cruel and cowardly, insolent and abject. They have superstition without a sense of religion; and in short they have all the vices of savage life, without any of its virtues. If we look a step higher, we find the same total want of principles with more refined cunning, no attachment but what centers in self, for the ties of relationship seem only to render inveteracy more inveterate."

"Even the honest men," say the Judges of Circuit, in a report made on terminating their Session; "Even the honest men as well as the rogues are perjured. The most simple and the most cunning alike make assertions that are incredible, or that are certainly false."

"In the course of our judicial duties," says the Report from Moorshedabad, Court of Appeal and Circuit (26th Jan. 1802), "we still meet with the same barefaced disregard of truth which always characterised the natives of India."

"No falsehood," says Judge Stracey, "is too extravagant or audacious to be advanced before the Court of Circuit. Perjury is extremely common." —*5th Report of Committee on East India Affairs.*

"They are probably somewhat more licentious than formerly. Chicanery, subornation, and fraud and perjury are certainly more common." —*Judge Stracey's Answer to Interrogatories*, 30th Jan. 1802.

"The lower classes are in general profligate and depraved. The moral duties are little attended to by the higher ones. All are litigious in the extreme, and the crime of perjury was never, we believe, more practised amongst all ranks, than at present."—*Answers of Magistrates of the 24 Pergunnahs to Interrogatories, &c.*

But perhaps the House may, with the least trouble, form a summary opinion of the result of the answers alluded to, by hearing an extract from a judicial letter from the Court of Directors to Bengal, dated 25th April, 1806, which will shew the impression which the information they had received had made on their minds; and I beg leave to recommend it the rather to the attention of the House, because it will shew what was then the Court of Directors' opinion of the moral character of the natives of India, however some of them may now have been led, I must rather say misled, into forming different sentiments. "The nefarious and dangerous crime of perjury we are much concerned to find continues to prevail in all directions, and even increases to such a pitch as to baffle and perplex the judicial proceedings of the courts, so that the judge receives all oral testimony with distrust, and is frequently obliged to investigate the character of the witness more closely than that of the criminal." The Directors very judiciously go on to remark on the probable cause of this low state of moral principle:—"The little obligation attached by the natives to an oath seems to proceed, in a great degree, from

the nature of their superstitions and the degraded character of their deities, as well as the almost entire want of moral instruction among them; and this points to the necessity of other remedies, as well as to the most rigorous punishment of a crime so hurtful to society as perjury."

If such be the moral state of the natives in general, we might well expect, at least it would be expected by all who have a just sense of the intimate connection between virtue and humanity, and on the contrary between depravity and cruelty, that the crimes of actual violators of the laws, and not of an individual criminal, but of the class of robbers in general, would be extremely shocking; but I quote the following passage from Mr. Dowdeswell's Report on the Police of Bengal, in order to counteract that strange and most unjust persuasion, which has been attempted to be diffused, that the Hindoos are a gentle and humane people. "Were I to enumerate only a thousandth part of the atrocities of the Decoits (a set of hereditary robbers), and of the consequent sufferings of the people, and were I to soften that recital in every mode which language would permit, I should still despair of obtaining credit solely on my own authority for the accuracy of the narrative."—*Mr. Dowdeswell's Report on the General State of the Police of Bengal*, p. 603.

"Robbery, rape, and even murder itself, are not the worst figures in this hideous and disgusting picture. Volumes might be filled with the recital of the atrocities of the Decoits, every line

of which would make the blood run cold with horror." *Ibid.*

I could corroborate my general representation of the moral degradation of the Hindoos, by still farther extracts, selected from that massy volume on the table*. But I will adduce but one more, taken from a document I have already referred to, the letter to the Venerable Dean of Westminster, Dr. Vincent. Speaking generally of the morals of the natives, his correspondent says; "The state of morality among the natives is very low indeed. I have had transactions with many of those who have the character of most respectable men, rich, and of good credit. I declare to you, I never met with *one* who had any idea of the obligation of an oath, or who would not break it without scruple, provided the crime could be effected without discovery and punishment, and produce to him a pecuniary profit. There may be natives of a different character; all I can say is, that I never met with *one*. I *am speaking of those who are not Christians*. Now I am clear, that no man, in the course of his dealings in England with various characters for some years, could truly make a similar assertion."

Before we dismiss the long and melancholy train of witnesses whose estimate of the moral character of the natives of India I have been laying before you, let me beg that you will attend carefully to two considerations, which are

* Fifth Report from the East-India Committee.

applicable to almost all the opinions which I have adduced. These are, first, that the statements you have heard, are all of them the opinions of intelligent and respectable men, formed and given without reference to any particular question, which happened for the time to interest and divide the public mind; and still more, that they are the opinions of men who were upon the spot when those opinions were formed, and whose attention had been specially called to the subject of them, while the natives were actually under their view. These considerations, Sir, deserve the more attention, because, when we find conflicting testimony among men, all of whom we respect, we naturally look for circumstances which may explain the discrepancies which we witness. Without presuming to take upon me to estimate how much weight is to be assigned to this consideration, I am persuaded that our opponents themselves will frankly acknowledge, that in the two important particulars which I have just now noticed, they are oppositely circumstanced to the individuals whose testimony I have been laying before you. First, the favourable opinions of the people of India which they deliver, are such as occur to them in this country; which must render them peculiarly subject to the influence of that common cause of erroneous judgment of nations, the drawing of general inferences from individual instances; and secondly, they will not deny, that from the infirmities of our common nature, they cannot but be liable to have their

opinions in some degree, though imperceptibly, biassed by the particular occasion on which they are led to form them.

And now, Sir, after the decisive weight of testimony which I have laid before you, in proof of the general depravity of the people of Hindostan, what must we think of the soundness of the judgment pronounced by our opponents, that their morals are in general equal, nay, even superior, to those of the people of this country. We have been long accustomed, Sir, to read different characters of the same people from different travellers, of the intentions of all of whom, to speak the truth, we have entertained not the slightest suspicion; but a difference like this, I never before witnessed. In fact, however, Sir, we are relieved from our difficulty, by the very extent to which the assertion of our opponents is pushed. Had it been merely attempted to soften the colours in which we had painted the native character, you might have been more at a loss which was the correct representation. But when, instead of the dark hues which we have assigned to it, our opponents give it almost the fairest and loveliest tints of moral colouring, we are led infallibly to conclude that our opponents are either ill-informed, or that they are under the influence of prejudice; and happily, we are furnished, in the course of our discussion, with such flagrant instances of prejudice on this particular topic of religion, as to furnish a pretty clear explanation of those opinions of our opponents

which would otherwise appear the most inexplicable as well as extravagant.

I have already had occasion to shew, Sir, in one notable instance, that on this subject alone of religion and morals, as connected with the East Indies, men the most able and the best informed on all other topics are strangely and lamentably ignorant. There is a sort of inaptitude, if I may so term it, in what regards the subject of religion, which we discover in the generality of the Anglo Indians, which causes their judgments, however valuable on other occasions, to fail them egregiously in this. We have a curious illustration of this remark in the Fifth Report, which I quote the rather, because I understand the character of the writer to be excellent, and his authority beyond exception in all other matters. I speak of Mr. Dowdeswell. After that shocking account of the state of the police which I lately read to the House, suitably impressed with a sense of the evils of which he had been speaking, and very justly remarking also, that these dreadful practices must be severely punished, "but that a great deal more must be done in order to eradicate the seeds of those crimes, the real sources of the evil lying in the corrupt morals of the people," he adds, (and let me beg, that Gentlemen will observe that Mr. Dowdeswell very justly ascribes the perpetration of such crimes to general and moral causes, not merely to individual and accidental depravity;) "if" says he, "we would apply a last-

" ing remedy to the evil, we must adopt means " of instruction for the different classes of the " community; by which they may be restrained, " not only from the commission of public crimes, " but also from acts of immorality, by a dread " of the punishments denounced both in this " world and in a future state *by their respective* " *religious opinions.* The task would not, perhaps, " be so difficult as it may at first sight appear " to be. Some remains of the old system of Hin- " doo discipline still exist. The institutions of " Mahomedanism of that description, are still " better known. Both might be revived, and " gradually moulded into a regular system of in- " struction for both those great classes of the " community*."

We are led irresistibly, by this passage, to a conclusion, which, I confess, has been suggested to me by various other circumstances, that in the minds of too many of our opponents, Christianity and India are inconsistent, totally incompatible, ideas. We cannot but be reminded of the expression of a former ornament of this House, (a name of high authority in this country), that " the Europeans were commonly unbaptized in their passage to India." I will not presume to adopt so strong a position; but Mr. Burke himself could not have desired a stronger confirmation of his assertion, than some with which we have been supplied in the course of these discussions, more especially with this, wherein

* Fifth Report on East-India Affairs, p. 617. Mr. Dowdeswell's Report on the Police of Bengal, Sept. 22, 1809.

we find that a gentleman of intelligence and respectability, long resident in India, bewailing such a dissolution of the moral principle as rendered it difficult for the frame of society to hold together, and looking round solicitously for some remedy for the evil, never so much as thinks of resorting to Christianity, but proposes to resort to the revival of Hinduism and Mahomedanism, as the only expedient to which it is possible to have recourse.

Agreeing with him in my sense of the virulence of the disease, I differ entirely with respect to the remedy; for, blessed be God, we have a remedy fully adequate, and specially appropriate to the purpose. That remedy, Sir, is Christianity, which I justly call the appropriate remedy; for Christianity then assumes her true character, no less than she performs her natural and proper office, when she takes under her protection those poor degraded beings, on whom philosophy looks down with disdain, or perhaps with contemptuous condescension. On the very first promulgation of Christianity, it was declared by its Great Author, as "glad tidings to the poor;" and, ever faithful to her character, Christianity still delights to instruct the ignorant, to succour the needy, to comfort the sorrowful, to visit the forsaken. I confess to you, Sir, that but for my being conscious that we possessed the means of palliating, at least, the moral diseases which I have been describing, if not of effecting a perfect cure of them, I should not have had the heart to persevere in dragging you through the long and

painful succession of humiliating statements to which you have been lately listening. For, believe me, Sir, though I trust that to many in this House, I scarcely need to vindicate myself against such a charge, that it is not to insult over the melancholy degradation of these unhappy people, or to indulge in the proud triumph of our own superiority, that I have dwelt so long on this painful subject: but it is because I wish to impress you with a just sense of the malignity of their disease, that you may concur with me in the application of a remedy: for, I again and again declare to you, a remedy there doubtless is. God forbid that we should have only to sit down in hopeless dejection, under the conviction, that though these evils exist they are not to be removed. Sir, such a supposition would be absolute blasphemy; to believe that the Almighty Being, to whom both we and our East Indian fellow-subjects owe our existence, has doomed them to continue for ever, incurably, in that wretched state of moral depravity and degradation, in which they have hitherto remained! No, Sir, Providence has provided sufficient means for rescuing them from the depths in which they are now sunk, and I now call on you to open the way for their application; for to us, Sir, I confidently hope, is committed the honourable office of removing the barrier which now excludes the access of Christian light, with its long train of attendant blessings, into that benighted land, and thus, of ultimately cheering their desolate hearts with the

beams of Heavenly Truth, and Love, and Consolation. And therefore, Sir, I indignantly repel the charge which has been unjustly brought against me, that I am bringing an indictment against the whole native population of India; and "what have they done to provoke my enmity?" Sir, I have lived long enough to learn the important lesson, that flatterers are not friends: nay, Sir, they are the deadliest enemies. Let not our opponents, therefore, lay to their souls this flattering unction, that they are acting a friendly part towards the Hindoos. No, Sir: they, not I, are the real enemies of the natives of India, who, with the language of hollow adulation and "mouth honour" on their tongues, are in reality recommending the course which is to keep those miserable beings bowed down under the heavy yoke which now oppresses them. The most able of our opponents has told us, that some classes of the natives are as much below others as the inferior animals are below the human species. Yes, Sir, I well know it; and it is because I wish to do away this unjust inequality, to raise these poor *brutes* out of their present degraded state to the just level of their nature, that I am now bringing before you their real character, and explaining to you their true condition. And am not I, therefore, acting the part of the real friend? For true friendship, Sir, is apprehensive and solicitous: it is often jealous and suspicious of evil; often it even dreads the worst concerning the objects of its affection, from the solicitude it feels for their well-being, and its earnestness to promote their happiness.

Animated, Sir, by this unfeigned spirit of friendship for the natives of India, their religious and moral interests are undoubtedly our first concern; but the course we are recommending tends no less to promote their temporal well-being, than their eternal welfare; for such is their real condition, that we are prompted to endeavour to communicate to them the benefits of Christian instruction, scarcely less by religious principle than by the feelings of common humanity. Not, Sir, that I would pretend to conceal from the House, that the hope which, above all others, chiefly gladdens my heart, is that of being instrumental in bringing them into the paths by which they may be led to everlasting felicity. But still, were all considerations of a future state out of the question, I hesitate not to affirm, that a regard for their temporal well-being would alone furnish abundant motives for our endeavouring to diffuse among them the blessings of Christian light and moral instruction.

And surely it cannot be necessary for me to attempt in this place to prove, that though much of the large mass of comforts which we in this country enjoy, beyond those, I believe, of any other nation in ancient or in modern times, is owing to our invaluable constitution, yet that it is in no small degree, also, to be ascribed to our religious and moral superiority; for it is with gratitude alike, and with pleasure, that I declare my firm persuasion, that the influence of Christianity is greater in this country than in any other upon earth.

But surely, Sir, after the account we have received of the low state of morals among the natives of India, it cannot be necessary for me to prove by a reference to their various institutions, or to the circumstances of their social condition, that their situation is such as to interest every humane mind in improving it. For certainly such an enlightened Assembly as this needs scarcely to be reminded, that the moral Governor of the universe has established a never-failing and inseparable connection between vice and misery, though for a time they may appear dissevered, and vice may seem even to have associated herself with happiness. Sir, the evils of India are not merely such as a despotic government never fails to introduce and continue. In countries, great countries especially, groaning under the most absolute despotism, there may often be much domestic and even social happiness. It was to the condition of the subjects of an absolute government, that our great poet beautifully alluded when he observed,

> "With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
> "Glides the smooth current of domestic joy."

And truly in the main, though somewhat too broadly and strongly shaded, he adds,

> "Of all the ills that human hearts endure,
> "How few, that Courts or Kings can cause or cure."

But the evils of Hindostan are family, fire-side evils: they pervade the whole mass of the population, and embitter the domestic cup, in almost every family. Why need I, in this country, in-

sist on the evils which arise merely out of the institution of Caste itself; a system which, though, strange to say, it has been complimented as a device of deep political wisdom, must surely appear to every heart of true British temper to be a system at war with truth and nature; a detestable expedient for keeping the lower orders of the community bowed down in an abject state of hopeless and irremediable vassalage. It is justly, Sir, the glory of this country, that no member of our free community is naturally precluded from rising into the highest classes in society. And, in fact, we have all witnessed instances of men who have emerged out of their original poverty and obscurity, and have risen to the highest level by the inborn buoyancy of their superior natures; our free constitution, to which such occurrences are scarcely less honourable than to the individuals who are the subjects of them, opening the way for the developement, and Providence favouring the exercise, of their powers. Even where slavery has existed, it has commonly been possible, (though in the West Indies, alas! artificial difficulties have been interposed,) for individuals to burst their bonds, and assert the privileges of their nature. But the more cruel shackles of Caste are never to be shaken; as well might a dog, or any other of the brute creation, it is the Honourable Gentleman's own illustration, aspire to the dignity and rights of man. I will not think so injuriously of our opponents as not to be persuaded, that they would indignantly spurn at

the very idea of introducing such a system into this country. And are not the natives of India, our fellow-subjects, fairly intitled to all the benefits which we can safely impart to them? And if there be any which we cannot as yet venture to communicate, should we not at least be longing with eager and almost impatient expectation for the time when we can render them partakers of the best blessings which we ourselves enjoy? And here, Sir, in justice to my cause, I cannot but animadvert upon the spirit and tone with which our opponents have descanted on the impossibility of making the natives acquainted with the truths of Christianity, and of thereby effecting the moral improvement which Christianity would produce. I should have expected, Sir, if they were unwillingly compelled to so unwelcome a conclusion, as that all hopes of thus improving the natives of India must be abandoned as utterly impracticable, that they would form the opinion tardily and reluctantly, and express it with the most manifest concern. I need not remind the House with what an air of cheerfulness, not to say of levity, the declaration has been made. But it is fair to say, that one of the Honourable Members supplied the explanation, by plainly intimating, that in his opinion, all religions were alike acceptable to the common Father of the universe;—the same truth, a little differently expressed, as was taught by one of the Brahmins, who stated to one of our Missionaries, that heaven was a large palace, to

which there was a number of different roads, and that each nation or individual might choose his own at pleasure. But, as I have already stated, our opponents should remember, that Christianity, independently of its effects on a future state of existence, has been acknowledged even by avowed sceptics, to be, beyond all other institutions that ever existed, favourable to the temporal interests and happiness of man: and never was there a country where there is greater need than in India for the diffusion of its genial influence.

In reasoning concerning the happiness, no less than the virtue, of any people, all who consider how many of the charities of life, how large a portion of the greatest and best of our earthly comforts, arise out of our domestic relations, will think it difficult to overrate the sum of the evils produced, and the happiness impaired and lost, from the single circumstance of the prevalence of polygamy. Here again, to prove the effects of polygamy, I would refer to one who had no peculiar zeal for Christianity; though his understanding was too enlightened, and his mind too well-informed, for him not to recognize its superior excellencies; I mean, to the President Montesquieu. Would we see a lively picture of the jealousies, the heart-burnings, the artifice, the falsehood, the cruelty, the rage, and the despair of which polygamy is the fertile source, let us look to that great writer's Persian Letters. And here also, Sir, we may find a decisive settlement of the question, concerning which there has been some difference of opinion,

as to the rank in the scale of being which is assigned to the female sex among the natives of India. An Honourable Friend of mine (Mr. William Smith) has quoted some passages from their great lawgiver, which speak of women in general in the most disparaging and even contemptuous terms. We see the same estimate in many of the Hindoo customs and institutions; but this system of polygamy alone might have sufficed to prove, that the female sex could not possess in India that equality, in point of nature and rank, with ours, to which it is considered to be entitled in every Christian country, and on which, in fact, so much of the real dignity and happiness as well as so many of the benefits of the married state essentially depend.

Again in India, we find prevalent that evil, I mean Infanticide, against which we might have hoped that nature herself would have supplied adequate restraints, if we had not been taught by experience, that for our deliverance even from this detestable crime, we are indebted to Christianity. For it is not to philosophy, it is not to civilization; it is not to progress in refinement, or in the arts and comforts of social life; it is not even to Liberty herself, that the world is indebted for this emancipation. The friends of Christianity may justly glory in the acknowledgment of one of its greatest enemies, that infanticide was the incorrigible vice of all antiquity; and it is very striking, that both in India and in China, where the light of Revelation has never penetrated, this

detestable crime still asserts its superiority over nature itself, no less than over virtue. To this, in India, is added, the destruction of the sick and the aged, often by their nearest relatives.

There is another practice on the prevalence of which it is the rather necessary for me to insist, because it has been conceived by many gentlemen, otherwise well-informed on East-Indian topics, that whatever may have been formerly the case, the practice now exists in a very inconsiderable degree. The House must have anticipated my mention of the Burning of Widows on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands. A writer of great authority, Mr. Dow, many years ago, stated the custom to have become almost extinct. But sorry I am to say, that this is so far from being the truth, that the practice, which Bernier states to have been greatly discouraged, though not absolutely prohibited, by the Mahometan government, and which, in consequence, had considerably declined, has increased since the country came under our dominion. Great pains were taken by the Missionaries, a few years ago, to ascertain the number of widows which were annually burnt in a district thirty miles round Calcutta, and the House will be astonished to hear, that in this comparatively small area, one hundred and thirty widows were burnt in six months. In the year 1803, within the same space, the number amounted to two hundred and seventy-five, one of whom was a girl of eleven years of age. I ought to state, that the utmost pains were taken

to have the account correct; certain persons were employed purposely to watch and report the number of these horrible exhibitions; and the place, person, and other particulars were regularly certified. After hearing this, you will not be surprised on being told, that the whole number of these annual sacrifices of women, who are often thus cruelly torn from their children at the very time when, from the loss of their father, they must be in the greatest need of the fostering care of the surviving parent, is estimated, I think, in the Bengal provinces, to be ten thousand; the same number at which it was calculated, many years ago, by a gentleman whose uncommon proficiency in the native languages gave him peculiar advantages in his inquiries on this subject, the highly respected brother of the late Sir Robert Chambers.

Nor must we dare to flatter ourselves, though it would in truth be a wretched consolation, that, as has been sometimes stated, these sacrifices are spontaneous. Not to mention what Bernier himself relates from his own personal view, that the women are always carefully fastened down, sometimes with strong green bamboos, at others with thick strong ropes thoroughly soaked in water; which is done, as Mr. Marshman was frankly told, lest on feeling the fire they should run away and make their escape; Bernier goes on, "When the wretched victims drew back, I have seen those demons the Brahmins thrusting them into the fire with their long poles." Sometimes,

indeed, the relations and friends of the widow, exerting their utmost influence with her, succeed in persuading her to live; but too commonly, the poor wretches are forced into these acts of self-immolation by the joint influence of their hopes and fears. Their fears, however, are by far the more predominant of the two: and while the Brahmins delude them with the hopes of glory and immortality if they consign themselves to the flames, their only alternative is a life of hard fare, and servile offices; in short, a life of drudgery, degradation, and infamy.

Such, Sir, is the number of these human sacrifices, and such the principle on which they are made. As to their nature—I should shock the feelings of the hardest heart, if I were to read to you the authenticated statements of the horrid scenes of this kind which are continually taking place; to which the people are so accustomed, that, as I lately learned from a private friend of my own, who witnessed one of these dreadful transactions, a great concourse of spectators even in populous districts is not collected; and what is worse than all, the horrible scene is beheld with as much unconcern, and even levity, as we see among the lower orders in this country, when the destruction of one of the inferior animals is the subject of their savage mirth. But I will spare you the disgusting recital*; and yet I

* It would scarcely be justifiable to forbear inserting, what perhaps I was culpable in not reading to the House, the following account of one of these horrible scenes at which the Mi-

well remember what was said nearly in the place where I now stand on an occasion not dissimilar,

sionary, Mr. Marshman, was present a few years ago. I will extract his own words, only adding, that he is a man of the most established integrity, in the veracity of whose account entire reliance may be justly placed.

"A person informing us that a woman was about to be burnt with the corpse of her husband, near our house, I, with several of our brethren, hastened to the place: but before we could arrive, the pile was in flames. It was a horrible sight. The most shocking indifference and levity appeared among those who were present. I never saw any thing more brutal than their behaviour. The dreadful scene had not the least appearance of a religious ceremony. It resembled an abandoned rabble of boys in England, collected for the purpose of worrying to death a cat or a dog. A bamboo, perhaps twenty feet long, had been fastened at one end to a stake driven into the ground, and held down over the fire by men at the other. Such were the confusion, the levity, the bursts of brutal laughter, while the poor woman was burning alive before their eyes, that it seemed as if every spark of humanity was extinguished by this accursed superstition. That which added to the cruelty was, the smallness of the fire. It did not consist of so much wood as we consume in dressing a dinner: no, not this fire that was to consume the living and the dead! I saw the legs of the poor creature hanging out of the fire while her body was in flames. After a while, they took a bamboo ten or twelve feet long and stirred it, pushing and beating the half consumed corpses, as you would repair a fire of green wood, by throwing the unconsumed pieces into the middle. Perceiving the legs hanging out, they beat them with the bamboo for some time, in order to break the ligatures which fastened them at the knees, (for they would not have come near to touch them for the world). At length they succeeded in bending them upwards into the fire, the skin and muscles giving way, and discovering the knee sockets bare, with the balls of the leg bones: a sight this which, I need not say, made me thrill with horror, especially when I recollected that

by a Right Honourable Gentleman now no more, (Mr. Fox), "that true humanity consists, not in a squeamish ear, but in feeling for the sufferings of others, and being forward and active in relieving them." And, Sir, I am perfectly sure, that people could not make up their minds to the quiet toleration of these practices; they would not suffer them, I mean, to go on, without using every lawful effort to put a stop to them; but for our having not yet learned to consider India as a part of the British Empire, and its inhabitants as our fellow-subjects. The vast distance also of the scene of these barbarities tends considerably to deaden the impression which they would otherwise produce. If these transactions took place in any part of England, instead of the indifference with which they have been too long

this hapless victim of superstition was alive but a few minutes before. To have seen savage wolves thus tearing a human body limb from limb, would have been shocking; but to see relations and neighbours do this to one with whom they had familiarly conversed not an hour before, and to do it with an air of levity, was almost too much for me to bear.

"You expect, perhaps, to hear, that this unhappy victim was the wife of some Brahmin of high caste. She was the wife of a barber who dwelt in Serampore, and had died that morning, leaving the son I have mentioned, and a daughter of about eleven years of age. Thus has this infernal superstition aggravated the common miseries of life, and left these children stripped of both their parents in one day. Nor is this an uncommon case. It often happens to children far more helpless than these, sometimes to children possessed of property, which is then left, as well as themselves, to the mercy of those who have decoyed their mother to their father's funeral pile!"

regarded by men, I am sensible, not inferior in humanity to ourselves, the public zeal would be called forth, and every possible endeavour would be used to put an end to them. But here again, Sir, we see the effects of that strange delusion by which our countrymen are led into adopting one set of morals, and principles, and even feelings, for this country, and another for India. And, although, after the proofs of the abilities of the Anglo-Indians which have been exhibited to this House in the course of this very inquiry, the grossest prejudice alone would deny that they are men of superior talents and intelligence; yet, I must say, this very consideration, that they have one rule of judging for India, and another for Great Britain, renders them judges against whose competency I must except, when the question is concerning the introduction of British religion, British morals, and British manners, among the inhabitants of British India.

And now, Sir, I shall do little more than allude to another class of enormities, which by that very enormity, are in some measure shielded from the detestation they would otherwise incur: I allude to the various obscene and bloody rites of their idolatrous ceremonies, with all their unutterable abominations. A vain attempt has been made in a single instance to do away this charge; but had the endeavour succeeded, instead of utterly failing, as it certainly did, what would it avail when the obscene and bloody nature of the Hindoo superstitions is established by a cloud of

witnesses; and I will add, when from our more intimate acquaintance with the language, books, and institutions of the natives, the light of day is at length beginning to shine into these dens of darkness, and to expose their foul contents to our disgust and abhorrence. We might easily anticipate, that the people's being accustomed to witness the most disgustingly indecent exhibitions*, in broad day, must have the effect of destroying all that natural modesty which the Almighty has implanted in us for the most beneficial purposes. And such is in truth the fact: and a gentleman, whose name, if it were mentioned, would at once establish the undeniable truth of any statement which is made on his authority, has assured me, that whole families of both sexes and different ages, will witness together a sort of theatrical or pantomimical entertainment of the most shockingly indecent kind.

* I will give one instance only, as a specimen. It is related by an unexceptionable witness. "I suppose, 2000 men, women, and children, might be assembled. I observed, that one of the men standing before the idol in a boat, dancing and making indecent gestures, was stark naked. As the boat passed along, he was gazed at by the mob; nor could I perceive that this abominable action produced any other sensation than those of laughter. Before other images, young men, dressed in women's clothes were dancing with other men, making indecent gestures. I cannot help thinking, but that the vulgarest mob in England would have arisen on these impudent beasts, and have almost torn them in pieces. I have seen the same abominations exhibited before our own door." *Ward's Account of Religion, &c. of Hindoos*, 4to. Note, p. [illegible].

Lord Cornwallis, much to his honour, shortly after his arrival in India, declined an invitation to an amusement of this indecent kind, to which he had been asked by the native of the highest rank in the settlement. Indeed, to all who have made it their business to study the nature of idolatrous worship in general, I scarcely need remark, that in its superstitious rites, there has commonly been found to be a natural alliance between obscenity and cruelty; and of the Hindoo superstitions it may be truly affirmed, that they are scarcely less bloody than lascivious; and as the innate modesty of our nature is effaced by the one, so all the natural feelings of humanity are extinguished by the other. Hence it is, that, as in other instances, as well as in that of the burning of widows, we often read and hear of spectacles and incidents, which would deeply interest the feelings of most Europeans, being witnessed by the natives with utter insensibility. Were all considerations of humanity to be left out of the question, the consequences of some of the prevalent enormities would deserve our attention, even in a political view, on account of the numbers which fall victims to these pernicious superstitions. A gentleman of the highest integrity, and better qualified than almost any one else to form a correct judgment in this instance; I mean Dr. Carey, the Missionary, has calculated, that, taking in all the various modes and forms of destruction connected with the worship at the Temple of Jaggernaut in

Orissa, the lives of one hundred thousand human beings are annually expended in the service of that single idol.

It has often been truly remarked, particularly I think by the Historian of America, that the moral character of a people may commonly be known from the nature and attributes of the objects of its worship. On this principle, we might have anticipated the moral condition of the Hindoos, by ascertaining the character of their deities. If it was truly affirmed of the old pagan mythology, that scarcely a crime could be committed, the perpetrator of which might not plead in his justification, the precedent of one of the national Gods; far more truly may it be said, that in the adventures of the countless rabble of Hindoo deities, you may find every possible variety of every practicable crime. Here also, more truly than of old, every vice has its patron as well as its example. Their divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness, and cruelty. In short, their religious system is one grand abomination. Not but that I know you may sometimes find, in the sacred books of the Hindoos, acknowledgments of the unity of the great Creator of all things; but just as, from a passage of the same sort in Cicero, it would be contrary alike to reason and experience to argue, that the common pagan mythology was not the religion of the bulk of mankind in the ancient world; so it is far more absurd and groundless, to contend that more or fewer of the 33,000,000 of Hindoo

gods, with their several attributes and adventures, do not constitute the theology of the bulk of the natives of India. Both their civil and religious systems are radically and essentially the opposites of our own. Our religion is sublime, pure and beneficent. Theirs is mean, licentious, and cruel. Of our civil principles and condition, the common right of all ranks and classes to be governed, protected, and punished by equal laws, is the fundamental principle. Equality, in short, is the vital essence and the very glory of our English laws. Of theirs, the essential and universal pervading character is inequality; despotism in the higher classes, degradation and oppression in the lower. And such is the systematic oppression of this despotism, such its universal predominancy, that, not satisfied with condemning the wretched Soodras for life to their miserable debasement, (nay, death itself does not mend their condition), and endeavouring to make that degradation sure, by condemning them to ignorance as well as humiliation, the same inequalities pursue and harass their victims, in the various walks and occupations of life. If they engage in commerce, they are to pay *5l.* per cent. interest for money, while a Bramin pays *1l.*, and the other two castes *2l.* and *3l.* per cent. Their punishments are far more severe than those of the higher classes, for all crimes; although, with any but a Hindoo legislator, their inferior measure of knowledge might be held to extenuate their guilt. And are these systems which can

meet not merely with supporters, but even with panegyrists, in a British House of Commons? But, Sir, I verily believe, nay, I am fully persuaded, that our opponents would think and speak less favourably of the religious and moral system of the Hindoos if they knew it better; and when their eyes shall at length be irresistibly and fully, though tardily and reluctantly, opened to its real character, by that growing developement of its enormities which is daily effecting from the increased and increasing light cast on the subject by new publications, they will, I doubt not, be shocked to reflect of what a system they have been unwarily led to applaud the merits, and even contend for the continuance.

I beg the House, Sir, to observe, that in all the statements I have made either of the moral character of the natives of India, or of the nature of their superstitious principles and observances, I have not grounded any of my assertions on the authority of Dr. Buchanan; and that, because I knew that endeavours had been diligently, I hope not successfully, used, to call in question the accuracy of his representations; and therefore, if I could establish my positions by other witnesses, against whom no such prejudices prevailed as had been excited in Dr. Buchanan's instance, prudence suggested to me the expediency of preferring them. But, Sir, I should be shamefully wanting to the cause of justice and of truth, as well as of friendship, if I were not to protest against the prejudices to which I have alluded,

as utterly groundless. I beg the House to mark my assertion, that although Dr. Buchanan's statements have been scrutinised with jealous eyes, I am yet to learn one single instance in which any of his statements have been proved erroneous. But his character shall be laid before the House by a less questionable authority than my own. Lord Wellesley has publicly recorded his estimate of Dr. Buchanan's merits, not merely by selecting him for the important office of Vice-Provost of the College of Calcutta, but by the terms which he used in communicating to the Directors his having appointed Dr. Buchanan to that important office:—" I have also formed," says his Lordship, " the highest expectations from the abilities, learning, temper, and morals of Mr. Buchanan, whose character is also well known in England, and particularly to Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London; and to Dr. Milner, Master of Queen's College in the University of Cambridge."

I will not affirm that Dr. Buchanan is exempt from the ordinary infirmities of our common nature; and that he who has published so much, of course in some cases, on the authority of others, may never have been misinformed, or may never have been betrayed into the slightest inaccuracy: but this, Sir, I say, and I will even leave it to be determined by those who entertain the strongest prejudices against Dr. Buchanan, and who may complain the most loudly of the supposed inaccuracy of his statements, whether, at least, his

conduct was not that of one who was the most anxious and impartial inquirer after truth, and whether they themselves could have suggested any method by which the correctness or incorrectness of his statements could be more decisively ascertained than that which he adopted. He did not wait, as his opponents have done in calling in question his supposed inaccuracies, till his return to England; but he published his chief work while yet in India. In order to draw more attention to it, he presented it to Government; and it was in universal circulation for three years before he left Calcutta, on the very spot, and among the very people, whose opinions, institutions, and practices, were the subjects of his publication.

To those who have known as long, and as well as myself, the unblemished integrity of Dr. Buchanan in private life, this attestation to his character will be superfluous; but it is no more than paying a debt of justice to a man to whom India, I trust, will one day know, and, I doubt not, acknowledge, the unspeakable obligations which she owes him, for the degree of zeal and perseverance, scarcely to be paralleled, with which, in contempt of misconstruction and obloquy, he continues to promote her best interests, and to render her services, the amount of which no human language can adequately express.

And now, Sir, I am persuaded, that in all who hear me, there can be but one common feeling of deep commiseration for the unhappy people

whose sad state I have been describing to you; together with the most earnest wishes that we should commence, with prudence, but with zeal, our endeavours to communicate to those benighted regions, the genial life and warmth of our Christian principles and institutions, if it can be attempted without absolute ruin to our political interests in India. And if we were compelled by any irresistible urgency of political necessity, to abstain from the attempt, however cautiously and prudently it might be made, we should at least require this necessity to be clearly and indisputably established. For my own part, I confess, that nothing but absolute demonstration could convince me of the existence of such a necessity. For I should deem it almost morally impossible, that there could be any country in the state in which India is proved, but too clearly, now to be, which would not be likely to find Christianity the most powerful of all expedients for improving its morals, and promoting alike its temporal and eternal welfare. And I rejoice, Sir, in being able to assure you, that if we proceed with that prudence and caution with which all such measures should be conducted, the endeavour to communicate to our fellow-subjects in India, the benefits of Christian light and moral improvement may not only be made without danger, but, what is more, that there is no way whatever by which we should be so likely to promote our political interests in India; because there is no other way by which we should so

greatly strengthen the foundations of our government in that country. Here, Sir, as in the whole of our case, we stand on the sure and stable ground of fact and experience.

Our opponents represent the natives of India as of such a jealous sensibility, wherever their religion is concerned, that on the most reserved and cautious endeavours to convince them of the errors of their system, and to bring them over to our purer faith, their passions would be at once inflamed to madness, and some violent explosion would infallibly ensue. If this, Sir, were true, how is it then that, for more than a century, Christian Missionaries have been labouring in India, sometimes with considerable success, and yet we not only have heard of none of these tumults, but, as I before remarked, the Missionaries themselves, who, admitting the statement of our opponents to be correct, must necessarily be supposed to be the objects of universal jealousy and even antipathy, have been, on the contrary, not only the most esteemed, but the most beloved and popular, individuals in the country. No longer ago than in the year 1803, the Missionaries of the venerable Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, as we learn from its Report for that year, were eminently successful. Yet we heard of no insurrection, nay, of no discontent, in that part of the country; in short, we only knew of the proceedings at all, from the correspondence published by the Society.

In that only instance in which our opponents

have been enabled to find any just matter of complaint against any of the Missionaries, or rather against any of the converts of the Missionaries, (for it is only to them that any blame can be imputed), the transaction taken altogether, and with all its consequences, tends strongly to confirm our conclusions, and to invalidate those of our adversaries. The story is this—One of the native converts of the Baptist Missionaries, translated into Persian, and printed without the knowledge of the Missionaries, a sort of life of Mahomet, containing many abusive and highly objectionable passages. Of this book, 2000 copies were struck off, and 300 got into circulation in and about Calcutta, that is, in the very district where, of all others, the thickness of the population, and the consequent intercourse of the natives with each other, must naturally favour the diffusion of any popular discontent. Yet what was the result? Did the circumstance transpire in consequence of some sudden insurrection? Of all the three hundred copies, one alone was ever heard of. And what became of that? It was brought by the son of a native merchant to one of the Mahometan Professors in the College at Calcutta, with a request that he would write an answer to it, and vindicate the honour of their prophet and the truth of the Mahometan faith. Could any thing indicate less of that headlong violence which we are told we are to expect from the natives, whenever we attempt to call in question the tenets of their religion, or to inculcate our own?

Here was a case in which I grant there was imprudence; yet so far from producing any commotion, it scarcely excited the smallest attention; and in the only instance in which it was noticed, it was in that temperate and cool way of reason and argument, which can never tend to the disturbance of the public peace or to the endangering of our political interests. The true conclusion, Sir, from the incident, would be, that the natives were so tolerant and patient in what concerns their religion, that even the grossest imprudence could not rouse them to anger. But I ought not to close my account of this transaction without remarking, that no such incident can ever take place again; for it was settled, and indeed willingly conceded by the Missionaries themselves, that all publications should in future be inspected and licenced by a Government Officer, appointed for that purpose, before they should be sent into the world. Neither ought I to dismiss the subject, without remarking, that the whole conduct of the Missionaries on this occasion was in the highest degree honourable to their Christian character, and such as could not but obtain for them, as it did, the warm approbation of their superiors*. In truth,

* "We observe with great satisfaction the temperate and respectful conduct of the Society of Missionaries, in the discussions which took place on the subject of the publications to which your attention was directed, and of the measures which you felt yourselves called upon to adopt," &c.— Letter of Aug. 1808, from the Court of Directors to their Presidency at Fort William in Bengal.

if they had behaved on this occasion otherwise than as they did, they would have acted in a manner wholly inconsistent with their own deliberate purpose; for among other general resolutions for the regulation of their conduct, into which they entered previously to their commencing their professional labours, there is one, the good sense and prudence, as well as the Christian meekness of which, ought to cover with shame those who speak of them as a set of hairbrained fanatics. A part of it is as follows:—"It is necessary," they say, "in our intercourse with the Hindoos, that, as far as we are able, we abstain from those things which would increase their prejudices against the Gospel. Those parts of English manners which are most offensive to them should be kept out of sight; nor is it advisable at once to attack their prejudices by exhibiting with acrimony the sins of their gods; neither should we do violence to their images, nor interrupt their worship *."

In truth, Sir, these Anabaptist Missionaries, as, among other low epithets bestowed on them, they have been contemptuously termed, are entitled to our highest respect and admiration. One of them, Dr. Carey, was originally in one of the lowest stations of society; but, under all the disadvantages of such a situation, he had the genius as well as benevolence to devise the plan which has since been pursued, of forming a Society for communicating the blessings of Christian light to the natives of India; and his first care was

* See Baptist Missionary Society's Report.

to qualify himself to act a distinguished part in that truly noble enterprise. He resolutely applied himself to the diligent study of the learned languages; after making a considerable proficiency in them, he applied himself to several of the Oriental Tongues, more especially to that which I understand is regarded as the parent of them all, the Shanscrit: in which last, his proficiency is acknowledged to be far greater than that of Sir William Jones himself, or of any other European. Of several of these languages he has already published grammars, of one or two of them a dictionary, and he has in contemplation still greater literary enterprises. The very plan of one of them would excite the highest admiration and respect in every unprejudiced literary mind. All this time, Sir, he is labouring indefatigably as a Missionary with a warmth of zeal only equalled by that with which he prosecutes his literary labours. Merit like this could not escape the distinguishing eye of Lord Wellesley, who appointed him to be Professor of the Shanscrit, and of another of the native languages in the College at Calcutta.—Another of these Anabaptist Missionaries, Mr. Marshman, has established a Seminary for the cultivation of the Chinese Language, which he has studied with a success scarcely inferior to that of Dr. Carey in the Shanscrit.

On more than one occasion, at the annual examinations at the College at Calcutta, the highest eulogium was pronounced both on Carey and

Marshman, by the Governor General; and the happiest consequences were predicted from the prosecution of their literary labours *.

It is a merit of a more vulgar sort, but to those who are blind to their moral and even their literary excellencies, it may perhaps afford an estimate of value better suited to their principles and habits of calculation, that these men, and Mr. Ward also, another of the Missionaries, acquiring from 1000*l.* to 1500*l.* per annum each, by the various exercise of their talents,

* I ought not to omit the honourable testimony which has been borne to these extraordinary men by the Rev. Dr. Marsh of Cambridge. After some account of their literary labours, he proceeds: "Such are the exertions of those extraordinary men, the Missionaries at Serampore, who in the course of eleven years from the commencement of 1800, to the latest accounts, have contributed so much to the translation and dispersion of the Scriptures in the Oriental Languages, that the united efforts of no society whatever can be compared with them. These are the men who, before the Bible Society existed, formed the grand design of translating the Scriptures into all the languages of the East; these are the men who have been the grand instruments in the execution of this stupendous work; these are the men who are best qualified to complete the design so nobly begun, and hitherto so successfully performed,—who in the knowledge of language which they themselves have acquired,—who in the Seminary at Serampore, designed for the education of future translators,—who in their extensive connections with men of learning throughout the East,—who in the Missionary printing office, so well supplied with types of almost every description,—and who in the extensive supplies afforded by the Baptist Society, augmented by their own noble contributions, are in possession of the means which are required for that important purpose. These are the men, therefore, who are entitled to the thanks of the British Public."

throw the whole into the common stock of the Mission, which they thus support by their pecuniary contributions only less effectually than by their researches and labours of a higher order.

Such, Sir, are the exertions, such the merits, such the success, of these great and good men, for so I shall not hesitate to term them.

Nor ought we to withhold from the Society with which they are connected some share of praise, for having selected and sent forth agents so admirably fitted for their important functions; and it fairly entitles the Society to our confidence in future. Sir, to have chosen with judgment the instruments to be employed in high stations, has ever been deemed matter for no mean applause. In one instance, indeed, it has been stated, that after Lord Wellesley's departure, one of the most eminent of them was publicly guilty of an act of gross imprudence; but his imprudence could not have appeared to the Supreme Government to be of any very serious import, because he was subsequently honoured by that Government with an additional mark of favour, by having another professorship conferred on him.

With the well-founded claims which I have stated, to your respect, it will not, I trust, be very injurious to them, to have received in this House the contemptuous appellations of Anabaptists and Fanatics. For my own part I have lived too long to be much affected by such epithets, whether applied to others or to myself. But I confess, Sir, that it was not without some

surprise, as well as concern, that I heard these Missionaries spoken of in a style like this, by any gentleman whose eloquent exhibition this day, certainly indicates a liberal education and an instructed mind. It has been truly stated by perhaps the greatest philosopher as well as one of the ablest writers of the present day*, that to have the mind occupied with little blemishes, where they are associated with real and great excellencies, is by no means an evidence of superior intellectual or moral acuteness or refinement, but that it rather indicates a contracted understanding, and a vitiated taste. And I confess, Sir, that if there had been any little foibles or infirmities (of none of which however I am aware) in men of such exalted merit as those of whom I am now speaking, it might have been expected that the eye of every generous observer would be so filled and captivated with their excellencies, as to have no power, no leisure, to perceive their defects. But what shall we say? What estimate shall we form of the judgment of some of our opponents in this cause, and of their candour towards those who support it, when in the want of any defect in character, or even in conduct, to be imputed to the Missionaries, such terms as Anabaptist and Fanatic are applied to them. It has justly been said to be a sign that men begin to find themselves lacking in arguments, when they begin to call names. But I

* Dugald Stewart

own, Sir, I should have conceived, that let the consciousness of that want have pressed ever so severely, the Missionaries would have been shielded against such attacks as these, from any assailant of a cultivated mind, by their having conceived, and planned, and in the face of much opposition undertaken, and so long persevered in carrying on, at a vast expence of time and study and money, such dignified, beneficial, and disinterested labours *.

Anabaptists and Fanatics! These, Sir, are men not to be so disposed of. Far different was the impression which they produced on the mind of the Marquis Wellesley; far different the language he has bestowed on them. While in India, he patronised their literary labours; and very lately, in another place, publicly and on a solemn occasion, after describing, with a singular felicity of expression which must have fixed his words in every hearer's memory, their claim to the protection, though not to the direct encouragement of Government, he did them the honour of stating, that though he had no concern with them as Missionaries, they were known to him as men of learning. In fact, Sir, the qualifications which several of them have exhibited are truly extraordinary. And while the thoughts of a Christian

* A part of what is here said of the Missionaries was stated by Mr. Wilberforce in presenting to the House of Commons the Petition of the Baptist Society in favour of the diffusion of Christianity in the East.

observer of them, and of their past and present circumstances would naturally dwell on that providential ordination by which such uncommon men had been led to engage in that important service, and would thence perhaps derive no ill-grounded hope of the ultimate success of their labours; even a philosophical mind, if free from prejudice, could not but recognize in them an extraordinary union of various, and in some sort contradictory, qualities; — zeal combined with meekness, love with sobriety, courage and energy with prudence and perseverance. To this assemblage also, I may add another union, which, if less rare, is still uncommon,—great animation and diligence as Students, with no less assiduity and efficiency as Missionaries. When to these qualifications we superadd that generosity which, if exercised in any other cause, would have received as well as deserved the name of splendid munificence; and when we call to mind that it is by motives of unfeigned, though it had been misguided, benevolence, that these men were prompted to quit their native country, and devote themselves for life to their beneficent labours; is there not, on the whole, a character justly entitled at least to common respect? And may I not justly charge it to the score of prejudice, that the Honourable Gentleman can here find only objects of contempt and aversion? For my part, Sir, I confess the sensations excited in my mind are of a very different kind, and I would express them

in the words, if I could recollect them with accuracy, which were used by a learned prelate* on a similar occasion, by acknowledging, that I can only admire that eminence of merit which I despair myself to reach, and bow before such exalted virtue.

But of all the ground that has been taken by our opponents, that on which they appear to conceive themselves the strongest is, the Mutiny at Vellore. On no subject has there ever prevailed more gross, and, among our opponents, more obstinate misconception. For I hesitate not to declare, that this sad transaction, fully reviewed and fairly considered, will shew, like the circumstance which I lately mentioned of the obnoxious Mahometan pamphlet, that the natives are very far from being as jealous and resentful of the most distant approaches towards any interference with their peculiar institutions as our opponents have represented them to be. Let me however entreat you always to bear in mind, that it is no rude attack on their native superstitions which we are meditating, but only that prudent and gradual communication of light and truth which will cause the natives themselves spontaneously to abandon them.

The leading particulars of the Vellore Mutiny are so generally known, that I need not give you the pain you would suffer from hearing a fresh recital of the melancholy detail. Indeed, from

* Bishop Hurd.

motives of delicacy towards justly respectable individuals, I wish to forbear entering minutely into particulars; the most detailed inquiry into which, however, would only serve to strengthen my conclusions.

But before I proceed to touch lightly on this melancholy subject, permit me to remark, that it has been the common infirmity of our species in all uncivilized and uneducated nations, to overvalue their own peculiar customs and institutions, and sometimes to be devoted to them with such an excessive fondness of attachment, that a degree of power which has been sufficient to sway the people at its will in more important matters, has been forced in these to feel and acknowledge its own inferiority. Peter the Great, we know, in all the plenitude of his power, in vain endeavoured to force the Muscovites into the shaving of their beards; and the page of history furnishes other instances which inculcate the same lesson. But where the force of religion also intervenes, the principle becomes still stronger and more efficient. Indeed, in addressing an assembly so enlightened as this, I scarcely need remark, that men in general, in proportion as they have been uneducated and uninformed, have commonly been found to feel an extravagant attachment to the exterior symbols and observances of their various systems of religion; and, in truth, that the religion of the bulk of mankind has too often consisted altogether in these exterior ceremonies. Hence it would be

the part of true wisdom, and I am sure, for I say it on the authority of Scripture, of true Christianity also, in communicating to any people the principles of a purer faith, to leave them in quiet possession of these petty distinctions, instead of attacking or outraging them, reasonably trusting, that when the judgments of their converts should be convinced of the falsehood of their old principles, these distinctive characteristics of them would drop off of themselves.

If this be true, nay, indisputable reasoning, verified by the experience of all times and all countries, what a comment on them shall we find in the proceedings which led to the fatal Mutiny at Vellore! Though in the progress of that unhappy affair, the deposed family of Tippoo Sultan were found very naturally to have fomented the disaffection which prevailed, yet I have the highest authority, that of the Governor of Madras himself, confirmed also by the deliberate judgment of the Court of Directors, pronounced after a full investigation of the whole business, for saying, "that whatever difference of opinion the dispute respecting the more remote or primary causes of the mutiny may have occasioned, there has always prevailed but one sentiment respecting the immediate causes of that event. These are on all hands, admitted to have been certain military regulations, then recently introduced into the Madras army." These regulations were, the ordering "the Sepoys to appear on parade with their chins clean shaved, and the hair on the upper

lip cut after the same pattern; and never to wear the distinguishing marks of caste, or ear-rings when in uniform," and "the ordering, for the use of the Sepoys, a turban of a new pattern *."

Such were the new regulations; and how were these obnoxious regulations enforced? How was the rising discontent treated which these changes began to produce? Was it by argument and persuasion, the only weapons in the Missionary armoury? The refractory non-commissioned officers were ordered to be reduced to the ranks; nineteen of the ringleaders (privates) were condemned to receive severe corporal punishment, and to be dismissed the Company's service, as turbulent and unworthy subjects; the greater part of these offenders, shewing strong signs of contrition, were indeed forgiven; but the sentence was executed in front of the garrison on two of them, each receiving nine hundred lashes. Can we wonder at the sequel? Though the flame appeared for a while to be smothered and suppressed, the fire burnt in secret with only the greater vehemence. Can we be surprised that secret oaths began to be administered, and

* It is due to the highly respectable officer who was at that time first in command in the Carnatic, to state, that he appears to have been misled by the erroneous judgment of some officers of long experience in the Indian army, as well as (in the instance of the new turban) by a Court of Inquiry, into conceiving that no bad consequences would result from the new regulations; and having once commanded them to be introduced, it became a matter of extreme doubt and difficulty to decide whether it would be best to retract or enforce the orders.

secret engagements to be made? While to these religious discontents, combined with all those bad passions which raged the more violently because they durst not shew themselves but raged in secret, was superadded a political cause of powerful efficiency. The adherents of the deposed Sovereigns of Mysore, who were in custody in that part of the country, fanned the rising flame, and used every method for increasing the general discontent. For a time the volcano burnt inwardly, until at length, on the 10th of July, the fatal eruption took place, the dreadful circumstances of which are too well known to need enumeration. Can we wonder, Sir, that such causes as I have stated should have produced such effects? That which may more justly excite our wonder is, that such discontents as these were so easily quieted. But so it was; for, though the obnoxious regulations, strange to say, being still persisted in, a repetition of mutinies, followed perhaps by the same dreadful consequences, appeared likely to ensue, yet no sooner were the offensive alterations abandoned, than all was order and obedience. "About the 21st of July the same regula-
"tions were ordered to be introduced in the sub-
"sidiary force at Hydrabad, when the turban, the
"orders respecting the marks of caste, ear-rings,
"and whiskers, threw the whole of that force,
"amounting to ten thousand men, into the utmost
"disorder. They resolved not to submit to the
"new regulations, and every thing was ripening
"for an open revolt, when by the revocation of

" the orders the tumult was instantly allayed, " and the troops resumed their obedience." " The " tranquillity," says the Governor of Madras, " which at that place instantaneously followed a " revocation of the orders, sufficiently marked " the true cause of disaffection. The revocation, " as I have been assured by an eye-witness, ope- " rated on the troops with the suddenness and " efficacy of a charm *."—That when the troops

* Though for many reasons I wish not to enter more particularly than is absolutely necessary into the various circumstances which followed and were connected with the Vellore Mutiny, yet in justice to the great cause for which I am contending, it is fit that I should state, that after the Vellore Mutiny, an undue and unreasonable degree of suspicion and distrust prevailed for some time throughout all that part of India. This was naturally produced by the suddenness of the explosion, combined with a consciousness that it was commonly supposed that there had been a great if not a faulty want of vigilance and attention to various circumstances which preceded its actually breaking out, and ought to have suggested the necessity of precautionary measures for preventing that catastrophe. " Till that period," says the Governor of Madras, " the confidence of the European Offi- " cers in the affection of their Sepoys had been literally unli- " mited, and indeed found more than its justification in a fidelity " which had stood the proof of a series of years, and of a vast " variety of fortune. In the midst of this security a mine was " sprung. The Mutiny at Vellore overthrew all reliance on re- " ceived principles, and produced a violent though not unnatural " transition from the extreme of confidence to that of distrust. " The officers were tortured by the conviction of a general plot; " and, from the detached manner in which the Indian troops " are cantoned, found themselves left to the mercy of traitors. " All was suspense and horror; and in one instance, the agony " of these emotions actually ended in insanity."

The noble writer himself illustrates the state of mind of which

were on the very point of breaking out into open mutiny, the revocation of the obnoxious order should in a moment calm the storm, is a decisive proof that the men who in such circumstances could at once hear and obey the voice of reason, were men of well-disposed and temperate minds, who had been slowly and with difficulty urged

he is speaking, by another still more general and more lasting delusion, the Popish Plot. "The progress of the alarm created by "the apprehension of the Popish Plot in the reign of Charles the "Second, as described by Hume (Vol vi. p. 275), corresponds to a "degree of curious exactness with the public feeling at Madras. "Hume writes, 'While in this timorous and jealous disposition, "the cry of *a plot* all on a sudden struck their ears. They were "wakened from their slumber; and, like men affrighted in the "dark, took every shadow for a spectre The terror of each man "became the source of terror to another. And an universal panic "being diffused, reason and argument, and common sense and "common humanity lost all influence over them.'" These generally prevailing apprehensions very naturally led to measures, which might have produced the very worst consequences if the native troops had been less attached to us at heart than they really were.—Many useful reflections, and of a nature highly favourable to our cause, will be suggested to the considerate mind by the preceding statement of Lord William Bentinck. I will only put it to every unprejudiced mind to declare, whether the above transactions do not account for the prevalence of a somewhat morbid degree of sensibility in many both of the civil and military gentlemen of India and their connections, when the probability and amount of the danger of interfering with the religious opinions of the natives are in question. That danger may perhaps have been estimated at too low a rate, and have been too little regarded, previously to the Vellore Mutiny. If so, nothing can be more natural than that overweening confidence should be succeeded by feelings of a contrary nature. We all know the proneness of the human mind to pass from one extreme to its opposite.

into resistance, rather than that they were men of the quick and eager, and irritable spirit which the natives of India are alleged by our opponents to display whenever their peculiar opinions and institutions are ever so temperately opposed.

And now, Sir, I have stated to you from the first authority the nature and causes of the Vellore Mutiny; and, in the first place, may I not ask, if there was ever any attempt more atrociously unfair than to charge that event on there having been a greater number of Missionaries than before, or on any increased diligence in the circulation of the Holy Scriptures? Yet, strange to say, such is the force of prejudice even in sagacious and honourable minds, that to these causes it has been in a considerable degree attributed *. To disprove this assertion I might refer even to military authority, from which it would appear that there had been no such increased measure of attention to the propagation of our religion in that part of India, as to have had any share whatever in the production of the effect. "In no situation," says the respectable Officer who was then Commander-in-Chief of the forces under the Madras Government (General Sir John Cradock), "have so few measures been pursued by British "subjects for the conversion of the people to the

* It is clearly proved in a pamphlet, written by Lord Teignmouth, and published in 1808, On the Practicability, Duty, and Expediency of endeavouring to diffuse Christianity throughout India, that there had been no increase in the numbers of the Missionaries or of the translations of the Scriptures.

" religion which we profess. No Englishmen have " hitherto been employed on this duty in the pro- " vinces of the Peninsula; and from the almost " total absence of religious establishments in the " interior of the country, from the habits of life " prevalent among military men, it is a melan- " choly truth, that so unfrequent are the reli- " gious observances of officers doing duty with " battalions, that the Sepoys have not, until very " lately, discovered the nature of the religion " professed by the English *."

And now, Sir, let me again ask you, after your having heard this brief account of the unhappy transactions connected with the Vellore Mutiny, and I will confidently put the question to every unprejudiced mind, whether they afford any reasonable foundation for the inference which has been so precipitately drawn from them, that the morbid irritability of the natives in all that concerns their peculiar opinions and institutions is so great, as to render it infinitely dangerous to en-

* It is right to state, that this neglect of the common offices of Religion was by no means chargeable on the military gentlemen themselves; and to the honour of the military character it should be stated, that General Macdowall addressed a letter to the Madras Government for the purpose of effecting a reform in that particular. In this letter he stated as his opinion, that the indifference manifested by the European inhabitants of India in the adoration of the Supreme Being, which was ascribed to the want of places exclusively appropriated for Divine Service, was so far from being favourable even to our political interests that the constructing of convenient chapels at a moderate expence, at all stations where European troops might probably be quartered, would render the British character more respected by the natives, and would be attended by no evil consequences.

deavour, even in the most temperate and guarded manner, to propagate among them a purer system of religion and morals. Be this however as it may, you will at least see, I am confident, and I beg it may be carefully kept in mind, that the persuasion of this morbid irritability did not exist in the minds of our military officers, when they issued their new regulations. Those ordinances rather indicated a persuasion of a directly opposite sort; —that the natives were, even in their peculiar usages, so patient of provocation as to be very tardily and with great difficulty roused into resistance. But have we no reason to believe that this last impression, rather than that which now possesses the minds of our opponents, prevailed among the *civil servants* of the Company also, till their views were lately changed by their extravagant dread of Missionaries? For has not my Honourable Friend (Mr. W. Smith) stated to you an incident which is decisive to this point; that they were not afraid of seizing the Car and the Idol of Jaggernaut himself for the payment of a deficient tribute? And as my Honourable Friend truly remarked, are we, after this transaction, to hear with patience, men, who in the way of business, when the raising of some paltry tax was the object in question, could treat thus contemptuously the most sacred religious usages of the natives, and that in the very moment and circumstances in which the insult would be most keenly felt:—can we, I repeat it, with patience hear the same class of men speaking the language we now hear, of the tender sensibility of the natives, in all that concerns their re-

ligious opinions and practices, being such, that our opposing them even by argument and persuasion, would be too hazardous to be attempted; and this, when the object in view is no less than that of rescuing sixty millions of our fellow subjects from the lowest depths of moral degradation? There is a grossness of inconsistency here which would be beyond all precedent ridiculous, if the serious effects to be apprehended from it were not such as to excite in us the graver emotions of indignation and astonishment. I have dwelt the longer on the Vellore transactions, because I am convinced that, though most groundlessly, they have operated very powerfully in producing, in the minds of many well-disposed persons, strong prejudices against the question for which I am now contending.

But the fair statement of these Vellore transcations, combined with the seizure of Jaggernaut and his car, will by no means have produced its just and full effect, if, besides dashing to the ground that superstructure of unjust prejudices which has been raised on the basis of this particular incident, it does not also contribute powerfully to strengthen the persuasion, which so many other circumstances concur to produce in us, that our opponents are absolutely run away with by their prejudices and prepossessions on this subject of Christianizing, if for brevity's sake I may so term it, the natives of India. In every controversy, it is highly important to be furnished with a standard, by which

to judge of the soundness and correctness of the reasonings of the contending parties respectively. Now it fortunately happens, that in the Vellore business, on which our opponents have rested so much of their case, we are able to ascertain on what foundations they ground their opinions, to discover from what premises they draw their conclusions; and, as in this instance, in which that foundation and those premises can be scrutinized, we plainly see, that their opinions and conclusions are altogether unwarranted, we may fairly conclude it to be highly probable, that in other cases also, in which we have not the same opportunity of closely examining the grounds of their persuasions, those persuasions are equally unwarrantable. In short, Sir, our opponents shew us, that though, in other cases, men even of superior understandings and intelligence, we ought, on this subject, to except against their authority, because they are not so much under the guidance of their reason, as of their passions and their prejudices. Hence, like all men who are under the influence of prejudice, though otherwise reasonable and intelligent, they draw conclusions from slight and insufficient premises; they shut their eyes to unquestionable facts, and are led into gross errors and inconsistencies. In truth, we see good reason to suspect, that when this contest commenced, our opponents were almost wholly unacquainted with the subject; that their minds were never called to it, till it had become a strongly-contested question, in which, as men are

apt to do, they then took their side from the influence of their preconceived opinions.

But, Sir, as if to do away every remaining doubt which might still adhere to the most apprehensive minds, respecting the reasonableness of the alleged danger of our endeavouring, even temperately and cautiously, to enlighten and improve the natives of India, we are happily furnished with some particular instances in which the pernicious institutions of the natives have been combated and overcome. Indeed, the many improvements we have introduced among them, whether in our civil, judicial, financial, or military system, are all examples of this kind; for in all these we had to contend against that formidable principle of unchangeableness, which attaches to all the Indian institutions, and has been supposed to indicate their sacred source, and to forbid our presuming to question their wisdom or expediency. But there are two remarkable instances of our successful endeavours to root out inveterate and pernicious practices, which from their being complete within themselves, and being therefore more detached than those which are parts of a large and complicated system, may be more advantageously brought under our review. For a more minute detail of the cases I am about to lay before you, I refer to the papers on the table.

In the first of the instances which I am about to mention, I am happy to state, that the benefactor of India was a nobleman whom I may take

the liberty of calling my noble friend*. That nobleman who, greatly to his honour, in the midst of all his political and military concerns, found leisure to attend to the internal improvement of his government, and who, as if eager to avail himself of an opportunity of inculcating the real superiority of the honour to be obtained in bloodless victories over ignorance and error to those laurels that are reaped in the field of battle, founded the College at Calcutta, as a trophy to commemorate his success in the Mysore war. The Marquis Wellesley was informed, that a practice prevailed of sacrificing, at the change of every moon, many victims, chiefly children, to the river Ganges. He wished to put an end to this horrid practice; but he was conscious, as all men of sense must be in such cases, that he must feel his way cautiously and tenderly. To those who had adopted the principles of our opponents, it would have been sufficient, I fear, to make them acquiesce in the continuance of this practice, to be told, that it had subsisted for many hundreds, perhaps even for thousands, of years. But my noble Friend consulted no such advisers: he took counsel with his own excellent understanding, and humane heart; and the consequence soon followed—The practice was at an end. He conferred with some of the learned natives who were attached to the College, concerning the origin and principle of these horrid murders, and ascertained, that they were

* The Marquis Wellesley.

prescribed by no ordinance of religion, and that, probably, no objection would be made, no discontent produced, if they should be prohibited. They had gone on, from time immemorial, from the habit which had prevailed in India of suffering all such wicked and cruel practices to prevail, without question or opposition. A law therefore was issued, by the Governor-General in Council, declaring the practice to be henceforth murder punishable by death. The law was obeyed without a murmur: and not only have all the wretched victims, who would otherwise have been sacrificed, been since saved to the state; but this cause at least has been taken from the number of those which injure the community in India more than in proportion to the direct loss of life they occasion, by their hardening and depraving effects on the hearts and practice of the whole population.

But the second instance in which we are able to speak of a conquest already achieved over the native superstitions and cruelties of India, is of a still more striking nature, and where originally the obstacles were of a far more formidable character. It is now more than twenty years since Mr. Duncan, afterwards Governor of Bombay, then Resident at Benares, learned that a custom existed, among a tribe of the natives in that neighbourhood, of murdering their female infants; and he was able, through the influence of the British Government (for the influence of Government was in that instance used not only in-

noctuously but successfully), to prevail on the tribe (the Rajkumars of Juanpore) to enter into a positive engagement, to abstain in future from such detestable acts; and that any of their number who should be guilty of them, should be expelled from their tribe.

Thus the practice was abolished in Juanpore. But it had been suggested by Captain Wilford to Mr. Duncan, in his former inquiries concerning Infanticide in India, that the Greek Historians had stated it to prevail in the neighbourhood of Guzerat. Accordingly, recollecting the success of his former humane endeavour, he was animated by the benevolent desire of extending in that quarter also the triumphs of humanity. After some inquiry, he ascertained, that the practice of murdering the female infants was very general among the tribes of Jarejah and Cutch. And so firmly had this detestable custom rooted itself, and so powerfully was it established, as to have overcome the strongest of the human instincts, a mother's love of her infant. Not only did these mothers assist in destroying their offspring, but even when the Musselman prejudices (Musselman prejudices observe, Sir! it is with shame that I pronounce the words!) occasionally interfered to preserve their offspring, they held these females in the greatest contempt, calling them by a name which indicated that their fathers had derogated from their military caste, and were become pedlars. Governor Duncan's humane designs against this horrid

practice were most ably and effectually furthered, and at length accomplished, by the Resident, Colonel Walker, who displayed on this occasion a sagacity, address, and firmness, as well as humanity, which are beyond all praise. The whole progress of this admirable enterprise is published to the world; and the leading particulars, in Moor's Hindoo Infanticide, are now, on my motion, upon your table. Observe therefore, Sir, that here, as in other instances, I ground my arguments on attested, indisputable facts, and undeniable experience. Colonel Walker's attempt, at first, wore a very unpromising aspect. In return to a letter which he wrote to one of the chieftains of the tribe, reasoning with him on the cruelty of the practice, and urging him to discontinue it, he received an answer which would have been sufficient not only to discourage, but to intimidate, a less zealous, and, I may add, a less able adventurer. He was told, that it was "notorious that the Jare-"jahs had been in the habit of killing their "daughters for 4,000 years; and that no doubt "he was aware that all of God's creation, even "the mighty emperors of Hindustan, Shah Jehan, "Aurenzebe, and Akbar, had always preserved "friendship with his court, and had never acted "in that respect (female Infanticide) unreason-"ably. Even the king of the world had never "once thought of putting a stop to the custom "which prevails amongst the Jarejahs, of killing "their daughters."

After much more in defence of the practice, he concludes with a declaration, which, if somewhat ambiguously mysterious in its outset, is clear enough as to its meaning before it ends:—"God "is the giver, and God is the taker away; if any "one's affairs go to ruin, he must attribute his "fortune to God. *No one has until this day "wantonly quarrelled with this Durbar, who has "not in the end suffered loss.*"

"*This Durbar wishes no one ill, nor has ever "wantonly quarrelled with any one.*"

"*Do not address me again on this subject.*"

Such, Sir, was the reception of Colonel Walker's first application to the chieftains of the Jarejahs. And even one of the mothers returned him an answer of the same hopeless tenor.

Now, Sir, let me fairly put it to the House, whether such an answer as this, to any application which had been made for putting an end to any instance of native superstition, would not have been deemed such a decisive proof that it was dangerous to proceed in the attempt, that any one who had advised that the endeavour should be still persevered in, would have drawn upon himself the epithets of fanatic and enthusiast: and it would perhaps have been thought, even by candid and humane men, that an excess of zeal only could prompt any one to a continuance of efforts which appeared not only hopeless, but even highly dangerous. Colonel Walker might even have obtained the praise of having engaged and done his best, in this work

of humanity, though he had not been able to achieve it. But Colonel Walker, Sir, was not so easily to be disheartened: Colonel Walker's humanity was not satisfied with enjoying this barren and unprofitable triumph: he persevered, but by the only prudent, the only just and legitimate, means: he took frequent occasions of discussing the subject in the court of justice, and of exposing the enormity of so unnatural a practice: and, that I may hasten to so welcome a conclusion, within twelve months of the day on which the letters which I lately quoted had been written, the very writers of those letters, together with the Jarejah tribes in general, formally abjured for the future the practice of Infanticide, and declared themselves highly satisfied with the engagement which they made to that effect. To a man of principles and feelings such as Colonel Walker's must be, how delightful must have been the recompence which about two years afterwards he received. He took the opportunity afforded by his being in that neighbourhood, of causing to be brought to his tent, some of the infants which had been preserved: and let all who are now opposing us, listen to Colonel Walker's account of the scene. "It was extremely "gratifying on this occasion, to observe the tri- "umph of nature, feeling, and parental affec- "tion, over prejudice and a horrid superstition: "and that those who but a short period before "would (as many of them had done) have doom- "ed their infants to destruction without com- "punction, should now glory in their preserva-

" tion, and doat on them with fondness. The " Jarejah fathers, who but a short time back " would not have listened to the preservation of " their daughters, now exhibited them with " pride and fondness. Their mothers and nurses " also attended on this interesting occasion. " True to the feelings which are found in other " countries to prevail so forcibly, the emotions of " nature here exhibited were extremely moving. " The mothers placed their infants in the hands " of Colonel Walker, calling on him and their " gods to protect what he alone had taught them " to preserve. These infants they empiatically " called, 'his children.' And it is likely that this " distinction will continue to exist for some years " in Guzerat."

Why, Sir, with but one such incident as this, with but one such cordial, to cheer us on our progress, we should be indeed faint-hearted, we should be indeed chargeable with being wanting in the zeal and spirit of perseverance which such a cause as ours inspires, if we could faint by the way, and not determine to go forward in the face of every obstacle, prudently indeed and cautiously, but firmly and resolutely, pressing on towards the great object of our endeavours. In fact, Sir, here, as in other cases, when you are engaged in the prosecution of a worthy end, by just and wise means, difficulties and obstacles disappear as we proceed; and the phantoms, not to call them bugbears, of ignorance and error, melt away before the light of truth.

Had the noble Lord, whom I have already

mentioned, continued in India, it is highly probable that he would have achieved other conquests over the cruel practices of the natives of India. It is highly probable that he would have been able to put an end to the barbarous custom of widows destroying themselves; a custom which has been the disgrace of India for above two thousand years. But had the doctrines of our opponents continued to govern the practice of all the East India Company's servants in India, those two barbarous practices, the termination of which has been already effected, would still have carried on their destructive ravages. For let me ask our opponents, were these practices in any degree less firmly established, or of a later date, than various others which still continue? And with these instances before our eyes, in which the success of the efforts of humanity has been more rapid and more complete than probably our most sanguine expectations could anticipate, shall we suffer all the other detestable practices of India to prevail without the slightest attempt to put a stop to them? And shall we at once admit the assertions of those who thus, in defiance alike of reason and experience, inculcate on us that it is infinitely dangerous, though ever so prudently and cautiously, to endeavour to substitute the reign of light and truth and happiness, for that of darkness, delusion, and misery?

But, Sir, it is time to speak out, and to avow that I go much further than I have yet stated, and maintain, not only that it is *safe* to attempt, by

reasonable and prudent methods, to introduce into India the blessings of Christian Truth and moral improvement, but that true, aye, and imperious and urgent, policy, prescribe to us the same course. And let me not be misunderstood on this subject: I do not mean that I think our Indian Empire rests on such firm foundations as to be shaken by no convulsions, and that therefore we may incur the risk of popular ferments with impunity: no, Sir; I frankly acknowledge, that I have long thought that we hold our East Indian possessions by a very precarious tenure. This is a topic on which it would be painful to expatiate, and perhaps imprudent to be particular; but the most cursory survey of the circumstances of our East Indian Empire must be sufficient, in the minds of all who are ever so little read in the page of history, to justify the suspicion which I now intimate.

On the most superficial view, what a sight does that empire exhibit to us! A little island obtaining and keeping possession of immense regions, and of a population of sixty millions that inhabit them, at the distance of half the globe from it! of inhabitants differing from us as widely as human differences can go! differences exterior and interior—differences physical, moral, social and domestic—in points of religion, morals, institutions, language, manners, customs, climate, colour, in short in almost every possible particular that human experience can suggest, or human imagination devise! Such, Sir, is the partnership which

we have formed; such rather the body with which we are incorporated, nay, almost assimilated and identified. Our Oriental Empire indeed is now a vast edifice; but the lofty and spacious fabric rests on the surface of the earth, without foundations. The trunk of the tree is of prodigious dimensions, and there is an exterior of gigantic strength. It has spread its branches widely around it, and there is an increasing abundance of foliage and of fruit; but the mighty mass rests on the ground merely by its superincumbent weight, instead of having shot its roots into the soil, and incorporated itself with the parent earth beneath it. Who does not know that the first great storm probably would lay such a giant prostrate?

This, Sir, I fear, is but too just a representation of the state of our East Indian Empire. Various passages in the papers on the table clearly illustrate and strongly confirm this position; sometimes they distinctly express it. In truth, Sir, are we at this time of day still to be taught that most important lesson, that no government can be really secure which does not rest on the affections of the governed; or at least on their persuasion that its maintenance and preservation are in some degree connected with their own well-being? And did we want the papers on the table to inform us, as, however, in more than one place, they do inform us, that, notwithstanding the vast improvements we have introduced among the people of India, and the equity and humanity with which our government is administered, the native

population is not attached to us? It might easily be shewn also, that many of the peculiar institutions of India, more especially that of its castes, greatly favours the transference of dominion from one conqueror to another. Then, the situation and neighbourhood of India! Regions which have been again and again the prey of those vast Tartar hordes which at different times have descended like some mountain torrent, and have swept all before them with resistless fury! Sir, would we render ourselves really secure against all such attacks, as well as against any, less perhaps to be dreaded, which our great European enemy may make upon us in that quarter, let us endeavour to strike our roots into the soil, by the gradual introduction and establishment of our own principles and opinions; of our own laws, institutions, and manners; above all, as the source of every other improvement, of our religion, and consequently of our morals. Why, Sir, if it were only that we should thereby render the subjects of our Asiatic Empire a distinct and peculiar people; that we should create a sort of moral and political oasis in the vast expanse of the Asiatic regions, and amidst the unnumbered myriads of its population, by this change we should render our East Indian dominions more secure, merely from the natural desire which men feel to preserve their own institutions, solely because they are their own, from invaders who would destroy them. But far more than this; —Are we so little aware of the vast superiority even of European laws and institutions, and far more of British laws and institutions, over those

of Asia, as not to be prepared to predict with confidence, that the Indian community which should have exchanged its dark and bloody superstitions for the genial influence of Christian light and truth, would have experienced such an increase of civil order and security; of social pleasures and domestic comforts, as to be desirous of preserving the blessings it should have acquired; and can we doubt that it would be bound even by the ties of gratitude to those who had been the honoured instruments of communicating them?

Here again, Sir, we can answer this question from experience. We have a case precisely in point; by which, on a small scale, we are enabled to judge what would be the effects of the same experiment tried upon a larger. All around me have heard of the great Albuquerque, one of those extraordinary men who, nearly three hundred years ago, raised to the highest pitch the glory of the Portuguese name in India*. The commentaries

* For the above curious fact I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Southey, who has also been so obliging as to furnish me with the following curious and important fact, which from forgetfulness I omitted to mention in the House of Commons. When Joane de Barras wrote (a man who, for the extent of his researches, is worthy to be ranked with Herodotus), a fourth part of the population of Malabar consisted of native Moors; and the reason which he assigns for their rapid increase is, that they had obtained privileges from the king, and put themselves upon a level with the high castes, "for which reason many of the natives embraced their faith." He says in another place, that "the natives esteemed it a great honour when the Moors took their daughters to wife." The above fact plainly shews what has

of his son Bras de Albuquerque contain the following curious passage. "When Alf. de Albu-querque took the kingdom of Goa, he would "not permit that any woman from thenceforward "should burn herself; and although to change "their customs is equal to death, nevertheless they "rejoiced in life, and said great good of him, "because he commanded that they should not "burn themselves." It is added, in proof of the veneration in which this great man was held by the natives, "that long after his death, when a "Moor or Hindoo had received wrong, and could "obtain no redress from the Governor, the ag-"grieved person would go to Goa, to Albuquer-"que's tomb, and make an offering of oil at the "lamp which burned before it, and call upon "him for justice."

And now, Sir, if I have proved to you as I trust I have irrefragably proved, that the state of our East Indian Empire is such as to render it highly DESIRABLE to introduce among them the blessings of Christian light and moral improvement; that the idea of its being IMPRACTICABLE to do this is contrary alike to reason and to experience; that the attempt, if conducted prudently and cautiously, may be made with perfect *safety* to our political interests; nay more, that it is the very course by which THOSE INTERESTS MAY BE

been abundantly confirmed to me by private testimony, that the real cause which renders the natives of India afraid of losing caste is not any religious scruple, but merely the dread of the many and great temporal evils which proceed from the loss

MOST EFFECTUALLY PROMOTED AND SECURED; does it not follow from these premises as an irresistible conclusion, that we are clearly bound, nay, imperiously and urgently compelled, by THE STRONGEST OBLIGATIONS OF DUTY, to support the proposition for which I now call upon you for your assent. But what is that proposition? Its only fault, if any, is, that it falls so far short of what the nature of the case requires. Is it that we should immediately devise and proceed without delay to execute, the great and good and necessary work of improving the religion and morals of our East Indian fellow-subjects? No; but only that we should not substantially and in effect prevent others from engaging in it. Nay, not even that; but that we should not prevent Government having it in their power, with all due discretion, to give licences to proper persons to go to India and continue there, with a view of rendering to the natives this greatest of all services. Why, Sir, the commonest principles of toleration would give us much more than this. Where am I standing? Where is it, and when, that I am arguing this question? Is it not in the very assembly in which, within these few weeks, nothing but the clearest considerations of political expediency were held sufficient to justify our withholding from the Roman Catholics the enjoyment of the fullest measure of official as well as political advantages, and when you yourself, Sir*, though

* The Speaker.

you felt yourself bound to continue some few official disabilities, acknowledged that it was with reluctance and even with pain? And shall we now lay the religion which we ourselves profess under such a restraint in any part of our own dominions? No, Sir: it is impossible: you will not, you cannot, act thus. But, in addition to what I have already said, it deserves well to be considered, that if we should fail in our present endeavour, and if Christianity should be, as it then would be, the only untolerated religion in the British dominions in India, the evil would not stop here. The want of toleration would not be merely a negative mischief; the severest persecution must infallibly ensue. For, assuredly, there are, and by God's help I trust there ever will be, both European and native teachers prepared in the face even of death itself, to diffuse the blessed truths of Christianity.

But let it never be forgotten, it is toleration only that we ask: we utterly disclaim all ideas of proceeding by methods of compulsion or authority. But surely I need not have vindicated myself from any such imputation. The very cause which I plead would have been sufficient to protect me from it. Compulsion and Christianity! Why, the very terms are at variance with each other: the ideas are incompatible. In the language of Inspiration itself, Christianity has been called "the law of liberty." Her service, in the excellent formularies of our Church, has been truly denominated "perfect

freedom;" and they, let me add, will most advance her cause, who contend for it in her own spirit and character.

I have often been reminded, Sir, during the course of these discussions, of the similarity of the present case to another great contest of justice and humanity, in which, with many confederates far abler than myself, I was perseveringly and at length, blessed be God, successfully engaged some years ago. The resemblance I see is acknowledged by my Honourable Friend near me (Mr. William Smith), who is still faithful to the great principles which animated us in our former struggle, during the whole of which he was among the ablest as well as the most zealous and persevering of my associates.

On that occasion, let it be remembered, it was our ultimate object, by putting an end to those destructive ravages, which, for centuries, had produced universal insecurity of person and property along a vast extent of the coast of Africa, and had thereby protracted the reign of darkness and barbarism in that quarter of the globe, to open a way for the natural progress of civilization and knowledge; of Christian light and moral improvement: so now, likewise, we are engaged in the blessed work of substituting light for darkness, and the reign of truth and justice and social order and domestic comfort, of substituting all that can elevate the character, or add to the comfort of man, in the place of the most foul, degrading, and bloody system of superstition that ever depraved at once,

and enslaved, the nature, and destroyed the happiness of our species. In the case of the Slave Trade, as well as in this, we had the misfortune to find ourselves opposed by many of those whose means of local information were certainly considerable, but whose notions of facts were so obscured or warped by prejudices or prepossessions, as to be rendered strangely inaccurate and preposterous.

There, likewise, owing no doubt to the strange prejudices and prepossessions I have noticed, our opponents maintained, that there was no call whatever for the exercise of our humanity: that the Slave Trade, whatever our English notions of comfort might suggest to us, like the superstitious practices in India, added to the sum of human happiness, instead of lessening it; or at the least, we were wishing to make men happier against their will: and that, so far from there being any need for our interference to improve the condition of the slaves in the West Indies, already they were as happy as the day was long; nay happier, for they danced all night. Consistently therefore with these opinions, they called upon us, just as we have been called upon this evening, to find some other and better selected sphere, for the exertions of our humanity. Really, the similarity of the two cases runs almost on all fours: for on that occasion, as well as now, we were assured that we should infallibly produce insurrections; while it might be truly affirmed in both cases, that the language of our

opponents themselves was far more likely than ours to produce the apprehended evil. Happily, the West Indian predictions have been so far from verified in this particular, that I scarcely recollect any other period of the same length as that which has elapsed since we commenced our abolition-proceedings in which there had not been some insurrection or other. Sir, allow me to hope that the resemblance, which I have shewn to exist between the two cases with so striking an accordance, will be completed, by our finding, that, notwithstanding the different views and expectations which different gentlemen have formed of the effects of this measure, we shall all rejoice over it together ere many years shall be completed, and find all the fancied mischiefs apprehended by our opponents disproved by the event. I beg, however, that it may be observed, that the resemblance which I have been describing is not merely an illustration: it is an argument; and a very powerful one too it will appear to all who remember that we had then the misfortune to number many considerable men among our opponents; inasmuch as it shews how possible it is for men of eminent attainments to be misled, not merely into tolerating as an unavoidable evil, which it is only fair to confess was the argument of some of our opponents, but into supporting and panegyrizing, as warranted by the principles of justice and humanity, a cause, of which I will only say, that now, after

a few short years have expired, not a single man can be found to lift up his voice in its favour.

And now, Sir, if we suffer our imaginations to follow into its consequences the measure in which we are now engaged, and to look forward to the accomplishment of those hopes which I trust will be one day realized, what a prospect opens on our view! In the place of that degrading superstition, which now pervades those vast regions, Christianity, and the moral improvement which ever follows from its introduction, shall be diffused with all their blessed effects on individual character, and on social and domestic comfort. Surely, we here see a prize which it is worth contending for, at any cost of time and labour. And I can assure our opponents, that they are greatly deceived, if they imagine that we are likely to give up the contest, even if we should fail in our present attempt. Happily, Sir, it appears from the unprecedented number of petitions now on your table, that the importance of the question is duly appreciated by the public mind. And let it not be imagined that these petitions have been produced by a burst of momentary enthusiasm; that the zeal which has actuated the petitioners is a mere temporary flame, which will soon die away, and be exhausted. No, Sir: I am persuaded, that in proportion as the real condition of our Asiatic fellow-subjects shall be more generally known, the feeling which has already been so forcibly expressed, will prevail

still more extensively. If, therefore, our opponents really apprehend the greatest evils from discussing the subject, in common consistency with this opinion, they should suffer our question to pass, as the only way by which that discussion can be terminated. For they may be assured, that otherwise the public voice will call upon this House still more loudly than even it has now done. And assuredly, my friends who are associated with me in this great cause are animated with the same determination as myself, never to abandon it, either till success shall have crowned our efforts or till it shall appear utterly unattainable.

But after all, Sir, at the very moment when my friends and I were ready to raise the shout of victory, a proposition has been made to us by an Honourable Baronet, of which, though offered to us in the language, and by him, I do not deny, with the meaning, of good will to our object, I must confess I am more afraid than of all the other modes of opposition we have experienced in the course of these discussions. I am the more afraid of it, because the plausible and specious appearance with which it comes forward is likely to render its hostility so much the more efficient and destructive. It accosts us with a language of this sort—"We all mean the same thing: we all wish Christianity and moral improvement to be communicated to the natives of India: but we are afraid of the effects which will be produced in India by the appear-

ance of your proposed clause on the statute book. Government may grant licences to persons to go over to India for religious purposes, as well as any others, under the general powers to be granted to them by the Bill. We must, therefore, resist your clause."

If what has been already stated to the House should not have sufficed for dispelling any apprehensions of a dangerous ferment being produced in the public mind of India, by the existence in the statute book of the clause we have now proposed, all such fears will, I think, be removed, when I shall have read an extract from one of the volumes on your table, concerning the extreme difficulty that is experienced in India, in diffusing the most interesting intelligence throughout the mass of the people. Our opponents will assign more weight to the extract, because it is taken from Judge Strachey's answers to Lord Wellesley's interrogatories. "I "take this opportunity," says he, "of remark- "ing, that to render generally known any penal "law, is extremely difficult, particularly among "the lower orders of the people. Till they see "the effect of it, they remain ignorant of it; "and this, in spite of advertisements and pro- "clamations. News and information of all kinds "are, in Bengal, slowly and inaccurately trans- "mitted from one to another. Among us, "events obtain publicity through the means of "periodical prints, of epistolary correspondence, "and of verbal communication. Among the

" natives, there is nothing of the two first, and " even of the other hardly any *."

After hearing the above extract, the House will not, I think, participate in the apprehensions which some gentlemen seem to entertain, that the mere insertion of this clause into our statute book may produce a dangerous commotion among the native population of India. Besides, Sir, as has been well remarked by my Noble Friend †, who, in truth, has treated the whole of this subject with extraordinary discretion and ability, the natives, if they should read the clause, which, however, is a highly improbable occurrence, will find in it, and find I believe for the first time expressed in terms, a clear recognition, an effectual security, of their right to preserve their religious principles and institutions sacred and inviolate. The clause, thus framed, will therefore produce satisfaction among them rather than discontent, on that very subject of religion.

But, Sir, it is an additional argument, and with me I confess a very powerful one, for retaining this clause, that though the general power of granting licences with which the friends of the Honourable Baronet's motion would have us be satisfied, might provide sufficient openings for the sending over of Missionaries to India, and for the employment of them there, so long as they should

* Answer from Judge Strachey to Interrogatories, 30th Jan. 1802.

† Lord Castlereagh.

conduct themselves properly; which, however, I utterly deny; yet I beg the House ever to bear in mind, that my friends and I have far more in view in the measure we have been recommending, than merely the sending over and maintenance of Missionaries. I beg they will recollect what I stated in one of the first sentences which I addressed to you, that it is not merely for the purpose of enabling Government to grant licences to Missionaries that I support the present clause, but because, especially when taken in conjunction with the Resolution on which, according to the usage of Parliament, it is founded; by affirming the duty of enlightening the minds and improving the morals of our East-Indian fellow-subjects, it establishes the principle; it lays the ground for promoting education among them, and for diffusing useful knowledge of all kinds. When truth and reason, so long excluded from that benighted land, shall once more obtain access to it, (and we are this day engaged in the great work of breaking down that barrier which has hitherto substantially and practically excluded them), the understandings of the natives will begin to exert their powers; and their minds, once enlightened, will instinctively reject the profane absurdities of their theological, and the depraving vices of their moral system. Thus they will be prepared for the reception of Christianity, for "Christianity is a reasonable service," and then, we may appeal to the moral superiority of Christian Europe in mo-

dern times, in comparison with that of the most polished pagan communities, for the blessed effects which may be expected to follow on their moral, their social, and, above all, their domestic comfort.

But, Sir, to return to the question concerning the necessity of retaining our clause; I cannot but hope, after all we have heard in the course of our discussions, and more especially after what has passed subsequently to the Honourable Baronet's motion for leaving out our clause; after all this, I repeat it, I cannot but indulge the hope, that all those at least, who were disposed to leave our clause out of the Bill, on the ground of its being unnecessary, if not dangerous, will at length discover, that some such clause as this is absolutely indispensable for accomplishing the desire, which they profess in common with us, of furnishing the means of introducing Christianity into India. Indeed, it ought to open their eyes to the real practical effect of their own amendment, that they who are the most decidedly hostile to the introduction of Christianity into India, so readily assent to it, or rather so warmly support it.

But, Sir, let me ask, do they not see that if the clause be left out, the Act of Parliament will contain no mention whatever of religion or morals? no recognition of its being our duty to endeavour to communicate to our East Indian fellow-subjects the blessings of Christian light and moral improvement? That recognition will still, I

grant, be contained in the Resolution of the House of Commons, as well as in that of the House of Lords; but let me ask, will not this be precisely the situation in which the cause has stood, and stood, alas! to no purpose, for the last twenty years? For on the renewal of the Charter in 1793, both Houses of Parliament, as has been repeatedly stated, passed, and have ever since kept on their Journals, a Resolution similar to that which we have now adopted. But, as was unanswerably urged in defence of the Court of Directors, by one of the ablest and most active opponents of all attempts to convert the natives of India, this recognition, being only contained in the Votes of the two Houses, but not in the Act of the Legislature, the Executive Body, whose business it was to carry into execution what Parliament had prescribed by that Act, could not be chargeable with neglecting any duty which that statute had ordained, when, so far from favouring, they rather thwarted and hindered the attempts of the Missionaries. The guilt, as was irresistibly argued by the writer just alluded to; the guilt, if any, of not having favoured the endeavours of individuals to convert the natives of India, was not justly chargeable on the East India Company's Directors, nor yet on the Board of Controul, but on the Legislature, which prescribed to both the principles on which the government in India was to be conducted, but said not one syllable about religion or morals. And if the present Act, like the former, were to leave religion and morals un-

mentioned, the same inference might fairly be drawn from the silence of the Legislature; but with greatly increased force, since the enemies of East India Missions would truly state, that the subject, which had formerly attracted little attention, had now been long under the consideration of Parliament; and that, in the House of Commons especially, it had occasioned much debate. They would allege, that the advocates for the religious and moral improvement of India had maintained, that the moral degradation of our East Indian fellow-subjects, and their pernicious and cruel institutions, rendered it eminently desirable that we should endeavour to impart to them a purer system of faith and morals; that the attempt was perfectly practicable, and that it might be made with safety, nay even with advantage to our political interests;—that, on the other hand, our opponents had maintained, that we were bringing forward an unnecessary, nay a most pernicious project; that the principles of the Hindoo religion were eminently pure, their practice superior to our own; but, were this more doubtful, that the endeavour could not be made without endangering the very existence of our empire in India. Such, I say, it would be alleged, had been the state of the argument, and it would be added irresistibly, that Parliament had shewn, by rejecting the clause which had been offered by the advocates for Christianity in India, that it disapproved the project they had proposed.

If any thing more could then be needed to supply

additional force to the above argument, it would be the language which has at length been used by the ablest of our opponents. For happily, Sir, in the progress of our discussions, they have warmed in their course, one of them especially, to whose abilities and eloquence I pay no unwilling testimony, though I must say that he has imposed on himself a task which exceeds his, or indeed any human abilities, in undertaking to reconcile the manifest inconsistency of feeling the highest respect for Christianity, and of preserving at the same time any measure of reverence for the Hindoo religion, which, both in its theology and its morals, Christianity utterly abjures and condemns. The Honourable Gentleman, however, has spoken out; (I thank him for it;) and has relieved the question from all ambiguity,—speaking in terms of high admiration of the excellence and sublimity of the Hindoo religion, and pretty plainly intimating that we, who are endeavouring to substitute Christianity in the place of it, are actuated by a zeal the most fanatical and absurd. Indeed, he frankly acknowledged to us, that he had it once in contemplation to move a clause, expressly forbidding all further attempts of Christian Missionaries, leaving us to conclude that he abstained from so doing merely on prudential grounds. All this may be right, or it may be wrong; but after such sentiments have been uttered, and after the exulting approbation with which they were received by our opponents in general, let it no longer be said that we are all of one mind, all

wishing alike for the diffusion of Christianity in India, but only differing as to the mode of accomplishing that desirable event. No, Sir; the question is now put on its true basis, and it clearly appears to be no other than this, whether, as Christianity is the religion of the British Empire in Europe, the religion of Brahma and Vishnoo is not to be the acknowledged system of our Asiatic dominions.

I beg pardon, Sir, for having trespassed so long on the indulgence of the House: but the subject is one, the importance of which can scarcely be over-estimated. If, Sir, a British judge and jury, the former often at an advanced period of life, after a long course of professional labours, will sit patiently for more than an entire day to decide whether the life of some criminal shall be forfeited to the offended laws of his country; nay, even to settle some doubtful question of property; how much less will you grudge, even to me, a still larger portion of your time and attention than I have unwillingly presumed to occupy, when you consider, that the question which we are now deciding involves not the prosperity, not the life merely of an individual, but the religious and moral interests, the temporal at once and the eternal well-being, of sixty millions of our fellow-creatures!

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